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President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 52

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1)

The President: I now give the floor to the Secretary-General to present his report, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change".

The Secretary-General: I am grateful for this opportunity to present my report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change".

As this Assembly well knows, one of my chief aims ever since I became Secretary-General has been to make the United Nations more useful to its Member States and to the peoples of the world by making it more effective and efficient. I have consistently said that, in order to do this, we must be prepared to change with the times, constantly adjusting to new conditions and new needs.

That was the object of the reform report that I introduced in my first year and of other initiatives I have taken since then. It is equally the aim of this new report. The report sets out a package of very pragmatic improvements. It builds on all that we have achieved together in the past five years. And it is guided by what the Member States have decided should be the Organization's priorities.

I am proposing a thorough review of our programme of work to make sure we are concentrating our efforts on what matters to Member States and to the peoples of the world. The Millennium Declaration, along with the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development and other major conferences of the past decade, have outlined a comprehensive vision of what Member States seek to accomplish. We must now ensure that our programme of work is adjusted and aligned to support this ambitious agenda — especially the Millennium Development Goals and other imperatives in the economic and social areas. Our goals will not be met unless we put all our efforts behind them.

In response to specific requests made by this Assembly, the report contains a number of proposals for improving our performance in the areas of human rights and public information. Some have suggested that the attention given to these two areas implies a downgrading of the priority given to development. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have looked at human rights and public information in response to Members' specific requests and the report is driven by our overriding ambition and mission to meet the development goals set for the world's people.

Also, in response to the Assembly's request, the report identifies major improvements in the planning and servicing of meetings, including a more integrated approach and greater use of information technology.

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I have put forward a variety of ideas for improving the reports that the Secretariat prepares. This is not simply a question of reducing the number and length of reports, although that certainly is necessary. It is also a question of strengthening their quality to permit a more comprehensive and holistic consideration of complex, interconnected issues with which we must grapple. This is particularly relevant for the consideration of economic and social issues. The Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and subsidiary organs need high-quality analysis based on rigorous research and thematic coherence. Better reporting will help enhance the Organization's development voice and strengthen the role of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in leading the international agenda in this area.

The report also identifies further steps required to reinforce coordination among United Nations entities, particularly in the delivery of programmes at the country level. We are all better off when the United Nations works well as a team.

The report proposes some important changes in our budget and planning system. At the moment, we have three different processes covering different time scales, and there are three different oversight review mechanisms. This is unnecessarily complex and labour-intensive, and makes it nearly impossible for the vast majority of Member States to participate meaningfully in the deliberations of this Assembly.

I am establishing a high-level panel to take stock of the relationship between the United Nations and civil society. The intensity of this interaction has grown tremendously in the past 15 years or so. Much good has come from these contacts. At the same time, some real challenges have come to the fore, and we can all sense that it may well be time to look closely at what is working well and what is not. The panel will be composed of people from different backgrounds — Governments, non-governmental organizations, research institutions, parliaments and so on — as well as from different regions of the world, and will suggest ways to enhance this crucial relationship.

Finally, the report contains proposals aimed at making life better and more rewarding for our staff, as well as further improving their quality and performance, notably by making it easier for them to move between locations, between functions and between organizations.

This report provides broad direction for the future. It sets goals and provides an indication of how to reach those goals. The whole package hangs together as a coherent whole, and I urge the Assembly to treat it as such. What I need to know now is whether the Assembly agrees with the broad direction. I hope we can all agree that the programme of work needs to be updated; that reports can better serve the membership's difficult policy-making decisions; and that the system of planning and budgeting needs to be simplified. And I hope that once the Assembly debates the report in plenary meeting, it will adopt a single resolution giving me clear guidance on the way forward.

My proposals may seem modest, taken individually. But taken together, they amount to a new way of doing business. Most important, they are achievable steps, with real potential to make the United Nations a more effective instrument in pursuit of the priorities of its Members.

In closing, let me stress that as we move ahead, I would want there to be an open process, with real dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat, based on mutual trust and confidence. That is the only way for our Organization to meet the diverse and many demands placed on it. Let us, then, in the words of the Millennium Declaration, "spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument" (*resolution 55/2, para. 29*).

The President: First of all, let me thank the Secretary-General for his introductory statement, in which he touched upon the essential aspects of his reform proposal, contained in the document entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). I particularly welcome the fact that the Secretary-General clearly dispelled any anxiety that reform could lead to the curtailment of the development agenda of the United Nations.

Today, we have the report before us for consideration. In my view, the report of the Secretary-General is very good, comprehensive, timely and extremely useful. It was initiated by the Secretary-General and resulted from a thorough review of the work of the Secretariat, its mandates and its programmes. The report has been widely welcomed by the membership and deserves great credit.

We all know that the United Nations has already undergone changes in recent years. Its performance has improved, and it is now able to respond better to a wide

range of new challenges. But the United Nations reform of 1997 has not yet been fully completed. The United Nations still has many areas that need to be rationalized with a view to refining its functioning.

United Nations reform is a continuing process, and, therefore, I see the report as a stepping stone towards further improvements in the work of both the Secretariat and the General Assembly. That is why many of the Secretary-General's proposals could bring fresh ideas into the process of revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, which our presidency fully supports.

The initial informal response to the Secretary-General's proposals has been very positive. The report suggests a number of diverse improvements and innovative changes that would make the work of the United Nations more productive and efficient. I see the report as an important stimulus, to which we, the Member States, should react in a constructive way. United Nations reform is not and cannot be perceived as a unilateral action. It is a process in which the joint effort of the membership and the Secretariat is absolutely crucial for getting the second phase of reforms started and agreed actions implemented.

As members all know, the report was issued more than a month ago, and subsequently many regional briefings and one session of informal consultations have been held in order to provide additional information. Given the complexity of the issues, it is not surprising that many proposed actions still require further clarification. On the basis of consultations with a number of Member States, I have suggested that the Secretariat prepare a conference room paper that would provide written answers and explanations on all major issues raised by various groups or individual Member States, as well as on questions that I expect to arise during these important plenary meetings. We have agreed with the Secretary-General that such a paper will be prepared as a one-off exercise soon after this debate, so that it can be taken into account during the first round of the informal consultations. We believe that this approach will accommodate delegations' concerns and create an atmosphere of trust for further deliberations.

I recognize that what the Secretary-General has mapped out is an ongoing process. There are some actions within the purview of the Secretary-General for immediate implementation, and there are other actions that might need additional reports and/or further consideration by the relevant Committees next year. Many of the proposed actions call for measures to be taken by the Secretary-General with the endorsement and/or guidance of Member States. Our deliberations should result in formulating general directions for achieving agreed actions.

Let me now briefly inform Members how I intend to handle the process that will lead to the adoption of the resolution mentioned by the Secretary-General. Let me stress that this is going to be an open and very transparent process, in which all interested and concerned delegations will be involved. After this plenary debate, I will launch open-ended informal consultations as soon as possible, preferably on Friday morning, 1 November. I have already asked one Vice-President of the General Committee to help me lead the process and chair the informal consultations in my absence. I have also approached a number of Ambassadors with a request to assist the Vice-President and me in facilitating the process, and I shall announce their names before the end of the debate on this item.

I will carefully listen to the views, proposals and concerns of Members both at this plenary and during the informal consultations. After the debate and after the first round of the informal consultations, during which further clarification will be provided by the Secretariat, I will introduce the draft resolution, in which I will reflect those views. I hope that I can count on the constructive and active support of Members. I believe that, given good political will, the dedicated time and energy of concerned delegations and a bit of luck, we will have a workable, endorsed resolution before Christmas.

I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa, who will speak on behalf of the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries and the African Union.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Allow me to recall these noble words:

> "We will spare no effort to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing all of these priorities: the fight for development for all the peoples of the world; the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation and destruction of our common home." (*A/RES/55/2, para. 29*)

That is a quotation from the Millennium Declaration, endorsed by more than 160 heads of State or Government, who attended the Millennium Summit held in New York in September, 2000.

The Secretary-General has presented us with report the entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". The emphasis on this being an agenda for further change is indeed deliberate and very necessary. We wish to state from the outset that we welcome the Secretary-General's report. We support his efforts to strengthen our Organization, and believe that a strong and effective United Nations can play a pivotal role in carrying out the core Charter mission which was reaffirmed in the Millennium Declaration.

You, Sir, have invited Member States to engage in the strategic dialogue on strengthening this Organization. My delegation accepts your challenge and remains ready to assist you in any manner we can. We are troubled, however, by the suspicions and fears that the reform process seems to have provoked. Therefore, we resist the temptation to engage in detailed questioning of the intentions of our joint efforts. Instead, we choose to trust that the invitation for us to become part of an agenda for further change is in recognition of our joint responsibility to try to achieve the best for the good and welfare of our beloved United Nations.

In Africa we have come to recognize that there are dynamic linkages between development in our continent and the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. The establishment of the African Union and the adoption of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an acknowledgement by Africa that we need new institutions that are equipped to deal with the challenges of the new millennium. In our contribution to streamlining the African agenda in the General Assembly, we have already decided to cluster the three items on development in Africa. Already, the development issues on Africa — the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the implementation of the Second Industrial Decade for Africa — were addressed in a joint debate in this Assembly.

We intend to take this process of streamlining African agenda items even further. The Secretary-General makes good proposals to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the United Nations. They should be guided by decisions contained in the Millennium Declaration, the Durban Declaration, as well as the outcomes of the Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development and the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. The mandates of those Conferences form the basis of the task this Assembly must carry out collectively. A clearly spelled out follow-up mechanism and a revised programme budget should integrate the follow-up processes. However, reform is an ongoing process, and should not become an end in itself.

We note, for example, that the Second Committee is engaged in intensive discussion on reforms, including considering the possibility of plastering macroeconomic issues on the agenda. We hope that will continue in a holistic and comprehensive manner and will inspire other Committees to do the same. That will avoid creating an impression that reform is limited to issues of development that are important to those of us from the developing world. We look forward to the implementation plan of the United Nations Development Group by September 2003, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. We recognize the importance of joint programming at the country level, pooling of resources, common databases and knowledge networks, dedicated support for the Resident Coordinator and integrated planning, budgeting and resource mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflict. However, we believe that all developing countries can benefit from this reform; it should not be limited to those countries that are emerging from conflict. While the proposed actions can contribute to strengthening the effectiveness of the United Nations at field level, the critical element of core resources must also be addressed. We would like to see included in this action proposed methods for the mobilization of additional resources for the United Nations. Additional, predictable resources help drive development in Africa. The current trend is towards a diminishing of core resources for the United Nations, and Africa bears the brunt of the resultant cutbacks in United Nations activities.

The creation of an additional position of Assistant Secretary-General is welcome, especially if a purpose of this post is to support policy coherence as emphasized in the Monterrey Consensus. Such a person will also be valuable in monitoring the implementation and follow-up efforts to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg. It will be important for the post incumbent to interact with institutional and other stakeholders such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. When the post is filled, we assume that the issue of equitable geographical representation will be kept in mind.

The appointment of an Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa was of particular interest to Africans. It is important for that official to have access to the Secretary-General, since his Office is to be entrusted with an already agreed special mandate on Africa which, as described in the report, is open to different interpretations. We believe that the Office should have a particular mandate on NEPAD, and we urge the Secretary-General to continue to review it. The Assembly recently adopted resolution 57/2 on NEPAD. In that connection, the Office of the Adviser must review and report on United Nations system and other international support for NEPAD and on the coordination and implementation of summit and conference outcomes as they pertain to Africa.

We welcome the aim of supporting human rights at the country level, rationalizing and streamlining the work of the human rights treaty bodies, improving the working methods of the system of special procedures, and streamlining management and improving the financial situation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We look forward to the engagement of Member States in future plans, including the expanding of the mandates of Resident Representatives.

Regarding the budget, my delegation supports and is ready to engage in all efforts aimed at improving the effectiveness of the United Nations, as well as streamlining the budgetary and administrative activities of the Organization. These include giving the Secretary-General flexibility to deploy resources between sub-programmes to meet the challenges our Organization may face. We look forward to the General Assembly receiving the revised programme budget in 2003 and believe that it should reflect the priorities contained in the medium-term plan and other legislative mandates, incorporating the Millennium Development Goals.

We urge the Secretary-General to present an improved planning and budgeting system and to provide a more detailed proposal on the benefits and implications of the shorter medium-term plan as well as on the accountability and monitoring measures. We reaffirms the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in the planning and programmatic aspects of the budget cycle, and request that we jointly continue to look into measures to improve the working methods of the Committee.

There is probably no delegation that would not be proud to have its citizens serving as international civil servants in this Organization. Therefore, we urge the Secretary-General to take any steps that will improve the working conditions of Secretariat employees. We want our international servants to be proud to serve the United Nations, and this can be only if we ourselves feel proud to be part of a strengthened Organization.

Mr. Vallenilla (Venezuela): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the presentation of his report on the strengthening of the United Nations (A/57/387). At the outset, allow me to say that the Group wants to convey to him its full support for the intentions outlined in the report:

> "The present report suggests a number of improvements aimed at ensuring that the Organization devotes its attention to the priorities fixed by the Member States, and that the Secretariat gives better service". (*A/57/387, p. 2*)

That is a very clear statement, and is in line with our concerns for more efficient work from this universal institution. We must clarify that our remarks are basically related to the economic and social, information and budgetary issues on which the Group takes a position.

We are prepared to engage in any action oriented towards those high aims. Our framework in that regard will be defined by two considerations: First, none of the actions for change must have a negative effect on the capacity of developing countries to negotiate. That is particularly important with regard to the provision of services for meetings of the Group and in relation to publications supplying important elements for the decision-making of developing countries. The second

consideration is that none of these actions should limit the capacity of the Secretariat to deliver its full potential contribution to the development of developing countries.

The report of the Secretary-General presents a comprehensive set of ideas, based on what has been achieved since 1997 in strengthening this strong world body. In today's globalizing world, we can truly expect that the wishes and priorities of Member States, as well as the aspirations of civil society to a fully efficient Organization, will be pursued.

The report deserves comprehensive and holistic consideration by Member States in order to ensure a transparent and fully participatory approach to the reform of the Organization. As the Secretary-General may be aware, the Group has made a thorough reading of his proposals. As a consequence, we have found a number of issues on which we would like further clarification in order to assess the implications of the related actions. To that end, we formulated a series of questions and presented them to the Secretariat on the occasion of the informal consultations convened by you, Mr. President. These underline the keen interest of the Group in grasping the scope of the proposed reforms. Having our questions answered is indispensable if we are to make a just and proper evaluation of these outstanding issues. We are pleased to know that a document is being prepared in that regard, as just announced.

The reform process must strengthen the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its role and functions in the development field, with the General Assembly providing the leadership to ensure the fulfilment of the social and economic goals enunciated in the Charter. Many challenges remain for developing countries. As a result of the dynamics of global change, those challenges present themselves in a new domestic and international framework.

The process should be carried out with the primary goal of strengthening the capacity of the Organization to address development issues and to respond effectively to the development needs and priorities of developing countries. Reform proposals and measures must be fully consistent with the medium-term plan, which constitutes the principal policy directive of the Organization. The main objective of the reform measures and proposals should be to enable the United Nations to implement fully all mandated programmes and activities. This is not a matter of downsizing or an effort to achieve savings. The developmental tasks of the United Nations are of fundamental importance and may not be treated as secondary to other functions.

The financial implications of any reform proposals on which the General Assembly shall take action should be assessed carefully. Any proposal for change in the financial and staff rules and regulations required as a result of the implementation of reform measures and proposals should be submitted to the Assembly for its consideration and approval.

Once again, the Group of 77 and China would like to stress its full support for the need to reform our Organization. In that spirit, we would like to reiterate our positive and constructive approach to engage in further consultations on this issue.

At the beginning of this century, at the Millennium Assembly, Member States "decided to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for pursuing the priorities adopted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (*A/57/387, summary*). Now, two years later, we have gone through very important political processes in the economic and social fields. In addition, a number of very important commitments have been made in the Conference on Financing for Development, the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Conference on Ageing and at the special General Assembly session on children, among others. We have created a network of commitments. The Organization has to respond to the challenges posed by the full implementation of those commitments. The world has gone through enormous political changes in the last decade. The United Nations must finally tackle its own restructuring in order to respond to the demands of the new times.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the Associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association country of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to thank the Secretary-General for his initiatives to further

strengthen the Organization. Under his leadership, we have come a long way towards modernizing the United Nations. The European Union fully supports the process set in motion by the Secretary-General's report. Together we have improved United Nations effectiveness and stature, both here in New York and in the field.

If the United Nations is to be able to meet the continuing new challenges of this millennium, there is much more to do. Above all, consensus around the development agenda must become a reality. That development agenda took significant steps forward as a result of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, the decisions taken in Rome, Monterrey and Johannesburg and the increased focus on the African continent enshrined in the membership's unanimous support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

We welcome the attention that these issues, among others, have received in the Secretary-General's report. That shows that strengthening the Organization is not an abstract activity pursued for its own purposes, but that this exercise provides the means to change the lives and well-being of the world's poor. It underlines the fact that the ultimate aim of our work in the United Nations is to make the world a better place for the poor people of this planet.

Two years ago, heads of State and Government set the goals and priorities of the Organization. Having adopted the blueprint, now is the time to ensure that the Organization is well equipped to implement these goals and priorities. The agenda we have before us, and the specific actions contained in it, constitute an invitation by the Secretary-General to Member States to strengthen the implementation capacity of the Organization. In that way, the United Nations can better assist Member States in implementing the Millennium Declaration and other crucial mandates of the Organization, including the follow-up to the Monterrey and Johannesburg summits. The European Union would like to accept that invitation, and move swiftly to the hard work that will commence once this report has been endorsed by the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General's proposed actions focus on implementation. They are practical and down-to-earth. They should, within the coming years, produce substantial improvements in the Organization. A clearer sense of the Organization's priorities means better and more efficient resource allocation, not budget cuts. The Secretary-General should do some things right away. Others have to be endorsed by us, the Member States, while still others will have to be discussed further by the General Assembly in the years to come, based upon, inter alia, further reports or in connection with next year's proposed budget for the 2004-2005 biennium. This process will generate tangible advantages for the entire United Nations membership, as well as for the Secretariat and its valuable staff, in terms of improved programme quality and delivery, transparency, accountability and value for money.

Let me give a few examples of where the European Union believes that the Member States and the Secretary-General, working together in a spirit of partnership, can deliver those tangible benefits.

The Secretary-General proposes to review some specific programme activities so as to improve the work of the United Nations — for instance, on important issues such as human rights and information and in the economic and social area. The European Union would like to stress the importance it attaches to strengthening the economic and social areas of activity in the United Nations, in particular in relation to Africa.

The world community has signed on to a new partnership for development, based on the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In order for us to realize the commitments of the Millennium Summit and the results of major United Nations conferences, and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, thereby lifting more people out of poverty, implementation through this partnership for development has to be successful.

We attach special importance to giving high priority to Africa in the work of the United Nations. The birth of the African Union, the consolidation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the recent positive prospects of ending some of Africa's protracted conflicts — in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Somalia — are notable political developments that call for continued, strong and focused cooperation between the United Nations system and Member States.

We see the proposed strengthening of the economic and social areas of activity in the United Nations against this overall background.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the Organization's presence in developing countries must be strengthened by improving its effectiveness. We welcome the proposal that the United Nations Development Group should draw up an implementation plan to that effect. We also welcome the steps towards clarifying the roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation.

The managerial capabilities of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs must be strengthened, given the burden it carries. There is a need for a clearer definition of responsibilities, including a better division of labour between Headquarters and the United Nations field stations, as well as improved coordination between Headquarters and regional levels, including regional commissions. We support the strengthening of the role of the Adviser for Special Assignments as a means of sustaining the Organization's stronger policy focus on Africa.

In this regard, we also emphasize the need to consolidate and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions.

The European Union remains supportive of involving civil society and the private sector in the work of the Organization. We look forward to the recommendations on improving modalities for United Nations interaction with civil society.

On human rights, the proposals of the Secretary-General identify the key areas where activities need to be reviewed and possibly strengthened. This is an area of work on which the European Union has always placed a high priority. And it is a matter of importance and concern for the General Assembly as a whole. There must be, therefore, the necessary degree of consultation with the relevant inter-governmental bodies in the implementation of the proposed changes.

The proposals for further improvement of United Nations information work are also very important. Strengthening the Organization in this field is crucial for securing continued popular support for the United Nations as the world's primary inter-governmental organization. Information work is constantly changing, driven by technological advance. That in turn requires a constant process of appraisal to make sure that the United Nations is reaching its target audiences and getting its message across with the most effective means possible. Reviewing the role of the United Nations Information Centres should be seen in that context and deserves serious consideration. The European Union stands ready in principle to take up the challenge in the Secretary-General's proposal aimed at making the information work in Europe more efficient, and looks forward to participating in discussions about its practical implementation, taking into account regional needs.

The budget cycle of the United Nations clearly needs modernization, so it can better serve a modern and efficient Organization such as the United Nations. The important first step is a more transparent and strategic budget document which clearly sets out the Organization's priorities and consequent resource requirements.

Therefore, the measures proposed by the Secretary-General on how best to present the budget to us — such as presentation of our priorities, briefer and more strategic documentation, fewer and more focused meetings and strengthening of the oversight and evaluation services — are very helpful.

We agree that the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, which will be submitted to us in 2003, should be thoroughly revised, so that it better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly. Obviously, this must be done within the overall framework of the medium-term plan.

Similarly, our daily work will become more transparent and focused when we have streamlined the jungle of reports and meetings. Documents that are on time and more to the point and better management of the General Assembly and Conference Services means greater efficiency. And this will give better opportunities for all to play a more significant role in our work.

We support the continuing improvement of human resources management in the coming years. An Organization's most valuable asset is its staff, and an agenda for streamlining the United Nations must also address the need to continue to enhance the competence of United Nations personnel.

It is also crucial that Member States shoulder their responsibilities and find ways to streamline the inter-governmental process. Important work has

already begun on ways to revitalize the General Assembly.

We have noted that the Secretary-General's proposed actions regarding the budget generally build on the framework already established by the General Assembly, for the budget cycle in general, for the introduction of results-based budgeting and for the Financial Rules and Regulations. We believe that the United Nations membership should endorse this road map for streamlining the implementation of these existing mandates. We recognize that concerns among the membership have to be addressed. In our view, we should allow ourselves sufficient time to deal with those concerns. But we should also, at this session of the General Assembly, agree on the goal to be achieved — a more transparent, results-oriented and strategic budget for our Organization.

In response to the Secretary-General's report, Member States must now show the leadership needed and give a renewed mandate to the Secretary-General in order to strengthen the Organization. We must formulate our joint vision of new and more modern ways of doing business in the United Nations and ask the Secretary-General to start implementation.

At the same time, we must all be aware that the proposed measures cannot be implemented automatically or overnight. We the Member States will come back to these issues, in close dialogue with the Secretary-General, as part of the regular inter-governmental consultation, once the detailed implementation gets under way.

Achieving that calls for deliberations at a high level. Permanent Representatives, the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General have an important task to perform in the coming days and weeks.

We all look to you, Mr. President, to lead us towards taking this first important step over the next few weeks. Please be reassured of the full cooperation of the United Nations to that end.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): It is an honour to address the Assembly on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum Group in New York: Australia, the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, as well as my own country, Fiji.

May I begin by offering our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for submitting this report (A/57/387) to the Assembly. Under his exemplary leadership, the United Nations has already taken important steps towards strengthening the Organization.

The report before us constitutes a serious programme for continuing reform, stretching across numerous areas of United Nations activity. During discussion of the Secretary-General's reform initiative during his first term, much was made of the idea that reform was not an event but a process. Indeed, reform has been one of the hallmarks of the Secretary-General's tenure. This report contains further practical proposals for improving the United Nations work. More importantly, it also promises systemic reform which would make the Organization more flexible and responsive in meeting the priorities of Member States.

Improving the way in which the United Nations operates requires the membership and the Secretariat to move jointly towards shared objectives. It will be necessary for us to distinguish between proposals solely within the Secretary-General's purview and those which require inter-governmental decision. But we should not dwell on this too long. The more important point is that we should all be moving in the same direction.

For our part, we think the direction indicated by the Secretary-General is the right one. We believe that the Assembly should endorse that direction and take action where it can now. While we need to delve into details to form judgement on some of the proposals, we should keep our focus during this session on the strategic direction the Secretary-General has proposed.

A few weeks ago, in the plenary debate on the Millennium Declaration Goals and the work of the Organization, many speakers expressed a desire to see the United Nations move from setting objectives to a new phase of implementing them. Without implementation, the Millennium Declaration Goals and the objectives set at Monterrey and Johannesburg could become hollow promises.

We agree with the Secretary-General that there are areas in which the United Nations needs to do more. In particular, we agree that the United Nations needs to take a more comprehensive look at migration issues, as proposed in paragraph 39 of the report, and

to strengthen its capacities to combat terrorism, drug trafficking and international crime.

Action 1 of the Secretary-General's report is, therefore, very timely. The United Nations needs to be more flexible in adapting what it does to what we want to achieve. At present, the Organization's capacity to respond to new priorities set by Member States is seriously constrained by the rigidity of the program budget. It is only sensible that less relevant activities give way to higher priorities over time. All of our Governments do this. The existing budget rules already provide for it to happen here. The time has certainly arrived for the United Nations to begin to do likewise.

I speak today on behalf of a group composed mostly of very small delegations. The avalanche of documentation, the tremendous number of meetings, the long agendas of many committees, and the sprawling budget process reduce the capacity of small delegations to affect the decisions in the General Assembly. And, not only do they diminish the Assembly's democratic quality by effectively disenfranchising small delegations, they also render the Assembly less effective than it ought to be.

There is clearly only so much the Secretariat can do to improve the operation of the inter-governmental machinery. In Actions 11 and 13, by which the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management will play a more active role in managing documentation and meetings, the Secretariat is doing what it can. I spoke on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum on this topic in the Fifth Committee last week.

Our delegations believe that Member States should do more on this front, both under the rubric of reform and within the ambit of the revitalization of the General Assembly.

Action 12, proposing that the Assembly establish a review mechanism for reports, is worth developing. We could start that at this session.

We should consider renewed efforts to streamline agendas and shorten meetings. Despite some changes, the Assembly's agenda remains overloaded with the detritus of the past. Some judicious culling would make our work more manageable with little loss.

And, Action 3, recommending that the High Commissioner for Human Rights should consult with the human rights treaty bodies with the aim of streamlining reporting procedures, should lead to improvements in a vital, but unduly cumbersome, area of United Nations activity.

We look forward to discuss these ideas and others in our informal meetings.

Actions 21 and 22, which suggest principles for modifying the budget process, warrant careful consideration. The Secretary-General's diagnosis of the malaise in the budget process is compelling. The process takes far too long. There is too much wrangling over inconsequential issues. There is little capacity for Member States to provide strategic direction. And, despite enormous expenditure of resources by Member States and the Secretariat, the budget shows negligible change from biennium to biennium. Further, the disconnect between evaluation and planning remains too wide, inhibiting more responsive planning based on results.

In short, the process disadvantages small States and serves the United Nations poorly. Given the complexity of the issues involved, it is unlikely that we could agree on the specifics of a remedy during this session. But, we should begin the discussion now and we may be able to reach agreement on some principles as a first step.

The countries of the Pacific Islands Forum fully support the Secretary-General's continuing efforts to strengthen the United Nations. We hope that other delegations are also ready to move in the direction outlined by the Secretary-General. It is our belief that joint action by the membership and the Secretariat can produce a more responsive United Nations and a more participative and productive General Assembly, which will better serve the priorities of the Member States.

Mr. Mackay (New Zealand): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Our delegations strongly support reform. We do so, not for the sake of change itself or because we equate change with savings. We support change because we believe this Organization must be strengthened in order to meet Member States' expectations. Change in the way the United Nations goes about implementing its mandates is essential for improving not only its effectiveness, but also its credibility and visibility.

The Secretary-General has mapped out a way forward for the Organization, focusing on some key messages: doing what matters, serving Member States better, working together, allocating resources to priorities, and investing in excellence through United Nations staff. We endorse the purpose of the report — to make the Organization more effective, modern and outcome-oriented.

Collectively these changes will better equip the Organization to meet our common aspirations for a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. The Millennium Declaration is a valuable organizing concept to help us focus on urgent and current priorities. Agreed at the highest level as a road map for our Organization, it addresses the full spectrum of United Nations activity, from peace and security, to human rights, to sustainable development. It articulates shared, ambitious and concrete development goals. These reforms will therefore help the United Nations better to reflect the collective will of Member States. The constraints on our ability to do so are clearly set out in the Secretary-General's report — a cluttered agenda dominated by meetings and documents rather than by results. The 36,000 outputs currently on the United Nations books make it harder for the United Nations to respond to new demands. We therefore welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to propose in the next budget the closest possible alignment of resources and activities with current priorities.

At the heart of the Secretary-General's proposals is the need for a functioning and effective General Assembly. This is the only organ of the United Nations where we all have a voice.

But that voice is weakened by systemic inefficiency and by an overloaded agenda. The General Assembly must focus on key issues that require international action. As well as being the best use of resources, this would also make the workload more targeted and manageable for small delegations. I can do no better in this respect than to refer to the eloquent and articulate comments of the Permanent Representative of Fiji, who spoke just before me, in this respect.

Special conferences can play an important role, but we should ensure that they do not take over the role of our Charter organs.

The measures suggested by the Secretary-General offer an opportunity for us all to strengthen our participation in the United Nations. The legislative role of the intergovernmental process is very important. We think that a stronger and better-functioning Secretariat will not dilute that role, but, on the contrary, will strengthen it by enabling us better to exercise our decision-making responsibility.

We also welcome the proposals relating to conference management and documentation. While this section is entitled "Serving Member States better", we see it more as a collaborative exercise. We delegations need to be more disciplined in our use of meeting time and in the organization of our work. Member States also have a parallel obligation to reform the Assembly and other key organs. The delegations of Australia, Canada and New Zealand take this shared responsibility seriously. We therefore support the Secretary-General's suggestion that we consider a mechanism to look at recurring reporting requirements.

Our delegations see a pressing need for reform of the budget and planning machinery. The Organization's recent introduction of results-based budgeting is ill served by existing processes. We share the Secretary-General's logic that focusing on outcomes requires a realignment of resources against priorities. This should be supported by budgeting and planning mechanisms that can adapt to change, that are integrated and that encourage a more efficient and strategic approach to decision-making.

We have said before that we do not view change as a cost-cutting exercise. But we must acknowledge that the Organization faces a problem with resources. We must make the best use of the resources available. If we can streamline the process of planning and allocating budgets, this will free up resources to redirect to substantive mandates of the Organization. We do not have the exact details yet of how actions 21 and 22 will be implemented, but we are ready now to sign on to the key principles: the budget presentation should be more strategic; the planning and budget processes must be streamlined; and the budget and planning cycles should be aligned.

Many other elements in this report relate to work in progress that will produce results in future. The Secretary-General's commitment to a process of incremental change is reinforced by the tasking he has initiated within the Secretariat to look again at the way

programmes and systems work in the areas of technical cooperation, human rights, public information and human resources management. We welcome the across-the-board review of the information activities and human rights machinery of the United Nations. We see a need for a global, integrated approach to these activities. We look forward to seeing the results of the various reviews in due course.

We have before us a political document that requires a political response. The Secretary-General has prepared a comprehensive package that signals the future direction of his ongoing reform efforts. In his own words, "they cannot be implemented automatically or overnight". We have been asked to provide a strong endorsement for the report. We are happy to do so and would, in fact, have gone further. In the light of the challenges currently facing the international community, we see an urgent need to revitalize this most important of multilateral institutions. We need to act now. We need an Organization that can adapt and respond to the myriad challenges facing us — including achieving the Millennium Development Goals and responding to HIV/AIDS, globalization and terrorism — many of which myriad challenges were not conceived of when the Organization was established more than 50 years ago.

We endorse an incremental approach, but would urge that this not be so subtly incremental as to produce little discernible improvement in the near future. Obviously our decisions must be well informed and well considered. But at this juncture the Secretary-General asks us to sign on to the overall principle and direction — broad direction, as he said earlier — in his report. We are ready to do so.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the African Group on item 52 of the agenda, "Strengthening of the United Nations system", an item to which the African Group attaches great importance, given its concern for the strengthening of the Organization and its desire to contribute to its efficiency in a manner that will enable it to deal with new challenges and opportunities.

The African Group wishes to express to the Secretary-General its sincere appreciation for his important report under consideration today, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". We believe that that report includes many positive proposals that would improve the efficiency and increase the impact of the United Nations. I would like to apologize in advance for the detailed manner in which I shall address those issues on behalf of my Group. We would also like to endorse the statement made by Venezuela, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The African Group believes that the strengthening of the United Nations is an uninterrupted sequence and an ongoing process that will not come to an end. It should be comprehensive, determining the long-term strategic direction of the Organization as well as the steps that are to be taken in the medium and short terms. Experts from the Group have carefully considered the report in various committees, as well as within the group of African ambassadors at the United Nations. The African Group has reached a preliminary position with regard to the content of the report, and has prepared a number of more detailed questions for the Secretariat with regard to the actions proposed in the report. A list of those questions is available at the side of the General Assembly Hall. The African Group looks forward to receiving clarifications from the Secretariat that will enable the Group to take a final position on the proposals and to participate effectively with States and groups of States in the consultations to be conducted in the coming weeks on the draft resolution to be adopted by the General Assembly on this issue.

In considering the proposals set out in the report, the African Group took into account not only the degree to which such proposals can be implemented, but also the consequences of their implementation. We therefore ask that a distinction be made between the proposals that fall within the purview of the Secretary-General and those that would require intergovernmental approval, or that might lead to conflict with mandates that have been established by the intergovernmental machinery, as those will require further careful consideration.

The African Group would also like to stress the importance of a harmonious and complete consideration of all efforts to strengthen the United Nations, to introduce innovations in the way in which the General Assembly works and to promote the Economic and Social Council and its substantive committees. We also accord great importance to following up the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the Millennium Summit and at other important international conferences and summits.

Given the strong link between all those objectives, they cannot be considered in isolation from one another.

The development agenda of the United Nations is of particular importance to the African Group. We have therefore always stressed the central role to be played by the Organization in formulating environmental, social and economic policies at the international level. The Group has repeatedly called for increasing the effectiveness of United Nations operational activities in the field and for bringing about the required coordination among all those activities in a manner that would help avoid any additional institutional burdens on developing countries and on African countries in particular.

The Group has also called for a more effective response by the United Nations to the sharp decrease that we have witnessed over many years in the basic resources of various programmes and funds, which is hindering the Organization's efforts to implement its programmes in support of the capabilities of developing countries. We therefore believe that action 14 should refer to the steps that will have to be taken in ensuring further, more predictable resource mobilization. While we welcome the contents of action 15 relating to the drafting of a document by 2003 to determine roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation, the Group believes that the objective of such a document should do more than just assist donor countries to take decisions. Such a document should be considered within a comprehensive intergovernmental framework that would allow for guidelines to be drawn up to govern the Secretariat's work in that very important field.

The African Group also attaches great importance to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration of September 2000. That Declaration included many international objectives to which heads of State or Government committed themselves within specific time frames. Given our strong belief in the importance of implementing those objectives, and while welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General and the Secretariat to promote those objectives and mobilize the necessary financial and institutional capabilities for their implementation, we would like to stress that it should not lead to any reduction in the importance of other development goals. Such goals were adopted by the international community at international conferences and summits and special sessions of the General Assembly that preceded the Millennium Summit, as well as those conferences that followed the Summit, such as the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the World Conference against racism.

The African Group believes that all the objectives set out and the decisions taken at summits and international conferences should be reflected in the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005.

In that regard, the African Group requests that the Secretariat, in the context of updating its approach to the implementation of Action 1 contained in the report of the Secretary-General, to present to the Assembly its views on the steps that can be taken to expedite the implementation of all African development goals, taking into account the fact that the African continent has not experienced the degree of progress enjoyed by other geographical areas.

The African Group emphasizes the importance of strengthening the Secretariat's work with regard to the African continent. The Group notes the decision of the Secretary-General, mentioned in the context of Action 18, to transfer the resources allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries to the Office of the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa. The Group stresses the need for further clarification with regard to the details of the mission of the Adviser for Special Assignments and it requests that he present his reports directly to the Secretary-General, taking into account the international consensus that particular priority be given to Africa in the coming phase.

The Group also looks forward to receiving the Secretary-General's views concerning how the institutional capabilities of the United Nations will be strengthened in order to address, in a coordinated and effective way, the African continent's needs in the light of the General Assembly's decisions and of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, as the new framework within which the United Nations and the international community will provide assistance to Africa. The African Group also requests, within that new institutional framework, the monitoring and follow-up of the fulfilment of the commitment of the United Nations and the international community in the implementation of NEPAD to ensure the needed harmony and

coordination among various departments of the Secretariat.

The African Group believes in the positive role played by the institutions of civil society and of the private sector as partners with Governments in formulating and implementing policies at the national, regional and international levels. We note with interest Action 19 contained in the Secretary-General's report, with regard to the interaction between civil society and the United Nations, as well as the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a panel of eminent personalities to consider the matter. In that regard, we should like to request that the guidelines for the panel be formulated within the intergovernmental context, taking into account the importance of equitable representation of developing countries and that the report and its recommendations be considered within the framework of the intergovernmental mechanism.

We note with great interest the proposed measures to promote the work of the United Nations system in the field of human rights. We should like to emphasize that the African Group fully endorses all efforts to promote the Organization's role in guaranteeing and protecting human rights. We should also like to stress the following important considerations: First, it is necessary that the general membership of the Organization debate and adopt any new approaches before their implementation and that linkages between human rights and development be avoided, including conditions in the Organization's operational activities that run counter to established practice and to the principles of universality, neutrality and multilateralism. Secondly, it is important that resident representatives of the United Nations limit themselves to their established mandates and that they not attempt to expand or exchange those mandates without the approval of the States concerned. Thirdly, while we welcome all efforts aimed at improving the reporting system for United Nations machinery, it is important to consider all aspects of that issue with the States concerned in a way that ensures effectiveness and applicability. Fourthly, in the implementation of human rights measures, it is important to be committed to established mandates, particularly in the case of Special Rapporteurs, some of whom have exceeded their mandates in a way that could undermine their neutrality.

The African Group supports all efforts aimed at the development of United Nations activities in the field of information and at strengthening the effectiveness of the Department of Public Information. Therefore, we believe that the Department's proposed restructuring should be initiated by consulting with Member States and should start with the Committee on Information. With regard to United Nations Information Centres, the African Group believes that the establishment of regional information offices would be beneficial only in areas that are advanced in communication and information technologies. Member States should establish guidelines for the application of such a proposal in a way that allows for separate consideration of each case and through consultations with host States.

The African Group welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals to develop, plan and coordinate publications in order to improve them and to make their contents more focused. The Group believes that any decision concerning the financial feasibility of publications should be taken in consultation with the United Nations intergovernmental bodies responsible for administrative and financial issues.

The African Group supports all efforts to enhance the efficiency and the impact of the United Nations, including the rationalizing of the Organization's administrative and financial activities. The Group would like to reaffirm once again the importance of rules and regulations governing programme planning and the programmatic aspects of the budget in the monitoring, implementation and evaluation process. The application of Article 105/6 (a) of those regulations should take into account the understanding that the adoption of the medium-term plan and of the programme budget constitute a reaffirmation of all the mandates that they include.

In conclusion, with regard to the Organization and its staff, the African Group welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals on mechanisms and incentives to encourage United Nations personnel to become more mobile within the Organization. We reiterate the relevant paragraphs of resolution 55/258 on human resources management, particularly with regard to the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional level. The Secretary-General may wish to consider an increase in the number of posts allocated to General Service staff, particularly those that are not subject to geographical distribution.

The African Group also welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to conduct a review of the internal justice system in order to enhance its effectiveness and to guarantee the equitable and legal treatment of all staff members.

Mr. Khoshroo (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to the Secretary-General for initiating the new reform proposals aimed at transforming the United Nations into an effective universal Organization prepared to address global challenges. I should also praise the Deputy Secretary-General and her colleagues for preparing the report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", which inspires new ideas and provides inputs for the Member States in their future deliberations on the topic.

Let me also associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Reform is not only a necessity, but also an obligation in setting up a dynamic international institution in the age of globalization. Although there have been some improvements so far as a result of the implementation of reform measures introduced and adopted in 1997, more changes have yet to be effectuated. The principal challenge ahead will be to enhance the capacities and to strengthen the capabilities of the multilateral machinery towards collective action in response to global demands and concerns. Hence, any reform proposal should refrain from offering selective approaches and rather present solutions on how to enable the United Nations to implement the priorities identified by its Member States, particularly during such recent global meetings as the Millennium Summit, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

A more vibrant General Assembly requires proper and necessary changes in its agenda and methods of work. Even more, its reform process should hinge upon the acknowledgement of the fundamental role of the General Assembly as the unique forum in which all States have an equal voice through the establishment of concrete and reliable mechanisms for the implementation of its resolutions.

The same approach may be chosen in respect of the proposed reform for the Economic and Social Council. Meanwhile, we agree with the Secretary-General that making the Council a privileged global forum for shaping development policies and strategies entails innovative measures, such as conducting dialogues with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization annually to better inform them of the sensitivities involved in their deliberations and policies vis-à-vis the composite difficulties which developing countries face. In this connection, reform of the Security Council should also be designed to promote an appropriate environment that upholds the imperatives of the balanced economic development of all regions in maintaining international peace and security.

We welcome the assertion of the Secretary-General of the importance of the development aspects of the work of the United Nations. However, there is no proposed concrete action in the report to ensure its adequacy and its success in practice. Among major priorities that have been identified in the outcomes of recently held conferences, only one or two areas have been addressed, while there are other numerous issues and priorities that have been left behind. In none of the sections of the report can a reference be found concerning the recent institutional agreements undertaken at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in chapter X of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which has brought new changes to the work of the different parts of the United Nations system.

With regard to coordination at the country level and the proposed new functions for the resident coordinator system, it is absolutely clear that, in addition to budgetary implications, any modification in the already agreed mandates of the United Nations funds and programmes requires the prior approval of the Member States. Moreover, any proposal which puts forward new functions as a conditionality for the maintenance of development activities at the field level would substantially distort the scope, nature and mandate of the United Nations funds and programmes, as well as those of the resident coordinator system, thus jeopardizing their development-based agenda and counteracting genuine efforts to improve overall efficiency.

It is precisely in this context that my delegation is of the view that broadening the scope of the activities of the resident coordinator system in order

> "to ensure that human rights are incorporated into country level analysis, planning and programme implementation" (*A/57/387, para. 51*)

needs to be carefully discussed within the relevant intergovernmental frameworks and through the procedures designated by the United Nations. Benefiting from the ultimate support of partner institutions is highly recommendable, yet it should be done within the mandates of each and every component of the United Nations system. Any step beyond the mandate must come about through the established procedures of the United Nations. This basic assertion holds true for the reforms proposed in the area of treaty bodies and reporting obligations of the States parties, as well as for setting criteria for human rights special procedures. While we believe that reducing the reporting obligations and related burdens of States parties to the different treaty bodies is of crucial importance to them, the effort to remove ambiguities and the elaboration of best practices through the full participation of Member States in the relevant processes are also highly required.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The restructuring and review of the activities of the Department of Public Information should aim at strengthening the role and activities of the Department and not at its gradual diminution. Since some functions currently undertaken by the Department may not be consonant with its core mission, we think the review could be considered as an opportunity to focus more on relevant mandated activities. As regards the proposed rationalization of the network of United Nations Information Centres, the idea of regional hubs is a positive initiative for developed regions, but the issue is much more complex in the case of developing countries. We believe the role of United Nations Information Centres should be strengthened in developing countries. The Centres also need to continue developing their own web pages in local languages.

My delegation has noted the concerns expressed here regarding the number, coherence and impact of United Nations reports, as well as the planning and management of meetings. We believe that it is the prerogative of Member States to discuss and propose remedial measures within intergovernmental bodies and establish criteria for consolidating identical reports on cross-cutting subjects, while maintaining balance among various issues.

We welcome the idea of simplification and improvement in the planning and budgetary process of the United Nations. To better reflect priorities in planning, we need to ensure that all intergovernmental mandates — aside from the Millennium Declaration priorities, which are long-term in nature, but including those of the General Assembly and the outcomes of recent international Conferences — are incorporated in the medium-term plan as the basic strategic guidance underpinning the work of the Organization. This programme planning, updated by the required revision at the mid-point of its term, should continue to be based on political mandates. Hence, budget allocations should serve as the basis of decisions with regard to the planning of exercises or the possible termination of programmes, as in the case of sunset provisions. Efforts to improve the existing coherence between planning and budgeting exercises should not jeopardize the rationality and credibility of this process, which is based primarily on the imperative of allocating resources to achieve full implementation of the mandates given by Member States. To this end, the effective involvement of separate intergovernmental bodies — namely, the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) — to perform these functions is fairly justified, taking into account that these bodies are rather complementary and mutually reinforcing.

We share the well-crafted vision of the Secretary-General concerning the reform of human resources development and management. The impact and vitality of the Organization rests upon having capable international staff, who represent a variety of dedicated, talented potential from all over the world. Promoting the excellence of the United Nations workplace needs to be pursued, but realization of the principle of equitable geographical distribution should be one of the main objectives of the reform in this area.

As regards the delegation of authority, we are of the view that, along with any delegation of authority, a clear mechanism of accountability should be in place. This provision, as well as many other issues, were discussed and decided last year by the General Assembly. The results of those deliberations were enlightening and continue to be a basis for consolidating diverse views in examining proposals.

In conclusion, Sir, I wish to assure you once again of my delegation's full cooperation in proceeding with the debates and deliberations on this subject in informal consultations.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Permit me first of all, Sir, to convey my sincere congratulations to the Secretary-General for his initiative in submitting a new series of proposals for reform in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). This is a praiseworthy initiative that confirms yet again his determination to give new impetus to the process of reform in our Organization.

This initiative seeks to deepen the process of reform that was launched in 1997, the essential goal of which was the adaptation of internal structures and the culture of the United Nations to the new challenges facing it.

My delegation also associates itself with the statements made by South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and by Egypt on behalf of the African Group. At this preliminary stage of our consideration of the report, I would like to share with the Assembly some comments and views on some aspects of the proposed reform that are of vital importance to my delegation.

We welcome the fact that the President of the General Assembly anticipated our expectations by informing us of his intention to organize informal consultations to examine concrete proposals for which the Secretary-General is asking the approval of Member States. In this context and in light of the importance of the question, perhaps Permanent Representatives themselves should become involved in the process of negotiation and support the efforts of the experts, with a view to reaching agreement on this aspect of the formula.

On questions of substance, the report contains 35 proposals relating to such important areas as human rights, information, administrative and budgetary aspects and economic cooperation. We share the Secretary-General's view on the need to continue with reform, with a view to meeting the challenge of strengthening our collective capacity, thus forging a common destiny in a world of increasingly rapid change. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having given us a succinct account of what has been accomplished in the realm of reform before suggesting to us what still remains to be done in this long process. Some of the actions contemplated are within the competence of the Secretary-General, and we thank him for having reported to Member States on it. Others are within the competence of intergovernmental bodies, which should examine them with care and transparency, in such a way as to make possible the participation of all delegations in the process of examination and decision-making.

As to the idea of re-focusing the activity of the Organization on priorities laid down during the Millennium Assembly, my delegation, repeating its commitment to the Millennium goals, would point out that these priorities are already an integral part of the medium-term plan for 2002-2005. In other words, the priorities laid down in the Millennium Declaration should not be allowed to replace the other legislative mandates, which should also be reflected in the medium-term plan.

We also wish to reaffirm the positive role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the consultative body of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the planning process. We believe that, in spite of certain shortcomings that are not specific to that body, the Committee is satisfactorily discharging its functions, such as verifying the existence of mandates for all the activities for inclusion in, or omission from, programmes contained in the medium-term plan and ruling on the conformity of the interpretation of these mandates with the decisions of the deliberative bodies. The Committee also has the task of verifying the technical correctness of the presentation of programmes and to ensure compliance with the priorities laid down in the medium-term plan. In that regard, I wish to stress that the most recent substantive session of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, held last July, was exemplary in terms of its success and effectiveness, given that the Committee completed its work in four weeks instead of the six weeks initially scheduled.

The medium-term plan is the cornerstone of the cycle of programme planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation of the United Nations. Because it reflects in terms of programmes and sub-programmes the directives given by the deliberative bodies, the medium-term plan determines the general direction of the United Nations and is a framework for the preparation of biennial programme budgets for the

period covered by the plan. Thus, while noting the Secretary-General's proposal to submit a shorter medium-term plan, we would like to understand the advantages and implications that will be entailed in the implementation of that measure.

With regard to programme evaluation, it is important to continue to abide by rule 105.6 (a) of the regulations and rules governing programme planning, budgetary aspects connected with programmes, performance monitoring and evaluation methods. We belief that the lack of will or any other subjective reason which may have led to the ineffective implementation of a mandated activity should not automatically lead to ending it because of obsolescence. That is the main reason why, throughout the past few years, we have been opposed to the concept of sunset clauses, and we continue to be committed to the strict application of rule 105.6 (a), cited earlier.

Regarding human rights, we welcome the Secretary-General's initiatives to strengthen the United Nations system in the area of promoting and protecting human rights. Nevertheless, we would like a reform process affecting an issue as sensitive as human rights to take place in the spirit of the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna in 1993, taking into account the indivisible and interdependent character of human rights and the principles of non-selectivity and impartiality, which should guide this very delicate reform exercise. This exercise is necessary, particularly in terms of rationalizing the procedures for drawing up reports by treaty bodies and for the management methods of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We also note with satisfaction the Secretary-General's commitment to strengthening information as a key element of reforming and revitalizing the United Nations system. However, reform of the Department of Public Information should not depend solely on financial criteria. In our view any reorientation of the Department should have the effect of maintaining and improving its activities of particular interest for developing countries and should be aimed at bridging the gap between the developing countries and the developed countries in that critical area. We urge the Secretariat to continue its consultations with the Committee on Information on restructuring or reorienting the activities of the Department of Public Information.

With regard to the proposal to create regional information centres, we note that many regional hubs are located in regions where costs are very high and where information and telecommunication infrastructures are well developed. In less favoured regions, that operation should be undertaken on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the host countries concerned.

The recent International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, are critically important to strengthening international economic cooperation. In that regard, we believe that it is timely to integrate the follow-up of the fulfilment of commitments into the process of following up the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, which would make possible the adoption of a comprehensive, coherent and integrated approach in attaining development goals.

The African continent, whose specific needs were a priority of the Millennium Summit, should continue to receive special attention. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which enjoys the solid support of the international community, deserves substantial support consistent with its ambitions, particularly through strengthening the relevant Secretariat structure so that it can effectively take charge of the international community's support activities for the implementation of NEPAD.

Those are a few comments on the Secretary-General's proposals for reform; and I wish to assure the Assembly of the wholehearted cooperation of my delegation and of its readiness to contribute constructively to the successful outcome of our deliberations on this important question.

Mr. Bennouna (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): The Kingdom of Morocco is genuinely pleased to take part in this debate and to make a modest contribution to the Assembly's collective reflection on reforming the United Nations. We wish to warmly thank the Secretary-General for having introduced to us this morning a very useful and stimulating report on strengthening the Organization (A/57/387).

A strong, credible and effective United Nations is in the interest of all Member States, whatever their status, their level of development or the means available to them. That is why the objectives of which Mr. Kofi Annan reminded us this morning deserve our

support and, undoubtedly, that of the entire Assembly. It is in everyone's clear interest to further rationalize our work, to make better use of the resources available to us, to avoid duplication and overlapping and, finally, to endow the executive branch with the most modern tools, so that it can carry out the tasks with which we have entrusted it. Those tasks are becoming increasingly complex; they are in keeping with the phenomenon of globalization, which imposes on the international community the duty of turning the United Nations into a credible and efficient regulatory body, because, as has been said, if the market is becoming global, then the rules must also become global. The regulatory activity that is expected of us ranges from international trade, financing for development and protecting the environment to combating crime and terrorism. As we all know and we unfortunately see today, terrorists have formed an international network and it is only through prosecution at the same level, that we can effectively combat their activities. We welcome the 9 September 2002 report. It is part of the reform activity initiated in 1997. However, reform is not an overnight phenomenon, nor a miracle. As Mr. Kofi Annan reminded us, it is a continuous effort and we must be in it for the long run.

It is no exaggeration to say that the very survival of the Organization probably depends on successful reform. In a world undergoing fundamental change, we can no longer expect to succeed through the use of methods and responses from the second half of the twentieth century, from a bygone world.

We also know that we cannot simply tear down our own house, which is why we completely support the Secretary-General's method. He begins by asking us to focus on the indispensable tools for change, planning goals and establishing what means would be suitable to attain the goals. The planning and budgeting must go hand in hand and must be envisaged and carried out within a reasonable period of time, for example two years as the Secretary-General suggested.

We support wholeheartedly his proposal, although we believe that during implementation, we will have to make planning and budgeting less bureaucratic. We should not be ashamed, but must adapt to the world as it is. Envisaging the plan and budget will be based on technical information provided by the administration, but it must be carried out at the higher political level, the level of the Secretary-General.

We are also convinced that the Secretary-General must enjoy, as he has requested, a degree of flexibility in terms of managing the overall budget. This flexibility we are entrusting to the highest official of the Organization and will have to include evaluations and reports to the governmental bodies, that will, in turn, evaluate the initiatives taken and make the necessary recommendations. These bodies include the Fifth Committee as well as the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC).

Nowadays, no efficient institution will succeed without good management, or good governance. The Secretary-General must be sure to achieve his objectives at the least possible cost and will have to reallocate resources according to new developments on the international scene. He will have to keep up a dialogue with the main organs of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council and the General Assembly. In other words, when he is allocating resources he will have to do so on the basis of a dialogue held through proper channels.

The General Assembly has universal status, but it will have to restructure itself if it wishes to face the new challenges before the Organization and new work methods. Today we hear about revitalizing the General Assembly, as if it was an ill patient requiring more energy. In fact what is necessary is just to bring our General Assembly and its methods in line with the increased number of Members, the nature of the questions it addresses, and evolution and developments in modern techniques of communication and information.

These tasks I have described must take place at the same time as the reform of the Secretariat, for this is the only way to ensure that reform will have the best impact. We are happy to see that the Presidency, aware of this link between reforming the Secretariat and revitalizing the General Assembly intends to emphasize revitalization at the very moment when reform of the Secretariat is under way.

We hope this activity of general interest will be carried out without reference to any special interests, and with the desire to ensure that those who are most ready to serve the reform and are best qualified will place themselves at the service of the Organization.

The United Nations is based on the sovereign equality of its Member States. But when we refer to States, as well as individuals, as we know some are

more equal than others. Africa is the continent that is least well endowed, and has suffered the most from developments that have occurred throughout the world over the last quarter century. It is therefore almost natural for everyone to display active solidarity towards the African countries, and this solidarity should be reflected by the Secretariat through a focal point, a special adviser to Mr. Kofi Annan, as has been proposed, who will coordinate and centralize the executive activities of the United Nations in the direction of Africa, because today's activities are too scattered. This activity will include something my country values highly, attention to the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In order for an organization to exist, it must act and it must disseminate information. It must communicate with its environment and receive feedback so it may permanently regenerate. However, should we try to communicate as we were communicating during the post-war period in the last quarter century? This is why we approved the Secretary-General's proposals to modernize the Department of Public Information (DPI) to enable it to perform better and cost less. In undertaking this reform of DPI, the needs of the developed countries and their concerns are not the same as those of the less well-endowed countries, in particular in Africa as I mentioned earlier.

It goes without saying that any reform process must be careful not to lose sight of the fact that its final objective is the human being. The United Nations has played an indispensable part in promoting human rights, in making them acceptable and habituating the most diverse cultural sensitivities to their importance. These past efforts, these geological layers, as it were, should today be evaluated globally in order to find more appropriate oversight mechanisms for the preservation of human rights.

It is obvious that the multiplication of committees of experts depending on this or that convention is a method that can be faulted, because it compels even the least well endowed countries to prepare multiple overlapping reports that require the services of experts. We believe this assessment process should be entrusted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and he should propose the most appropriate manner of simplifying these processes from the legal and technical points of view.

The Kingdom of Morocco supports the efforts to reform the United Nations undertaken by Mr. Kofi Annan. We believe we must move forward by adopting the areas of reform on which a consensus has formed within the Assembly. The remaining areas can be remitted to a follow-up group that could begin working next year. Through that group, which could be an open-ended working group, States could continue their dialogue with the Secretariat.

Increasingly, in a troubled world, people look anxiously to the United Nations in the hope of finding comfort. We must act. We have no right to disappoint them. We must act. We must respond to the expectations of those who look to us.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): One week has passed since we celebrated United Nations Day. A retrospective analysis of our Organization's 57 years of existence enables us to conclude the following.

The United Nations has not lost any of its relevance. The world needs the Organization more than ever to restore order in the global village, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. The multilateralism that our Organization embodies has proved vital for the establishment of international relations founded on democracy, inclusion, equality, justice and the equal sovereignty of States.

But the system we inherited following the Second World War needs to be brought up to date. During the past two decades, the world has experienced profound changes, in particular globalization, with all its positive and negative effects. Those changes need to be reflected in the structural and operational apparatus of the United Nations system, which now has the dual responsibility of adapting to the needs of our time and of shaping the course of future events to avoid directionlessness.

However, the United Nations is not an autonomous entity with its own sovereign decision-making power. Its action or inaction depends on the collective decisions of its Member States. The Organization's effectiveness is dependent on the means and resources that we, the Member States, put at its disposal. Its effectiveness also depends on our capacity to reconcile and even to restrain our national interests in the interest of the larger community.

It is on the basis of these observations that my delegation would today like to assess the series of reforms presented by the Secretary-General in his report (A/57/387). In that regard, I would like to pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, a far-sighted man who has been able to perceive the virtue of change in a world where change is the only constant. He has made the strengthening of the United Nations his personal cause. Through his actions he has shown himself to be much wiser than we are, and history will undoubtedly prove him right.

I would also like to salute the efforts of Ms. Louise Fréchette aimed at clarifying the proposed reforms for the benefit of the Member States and to express to the President our gratitude for the initiatives that he has taken to facilitate the process of consideration of the Secretary-General's recommendations so as to bring the process to a successful and prompt conclusion.

My delegation associates itself with the common African position on the Secretary-General's measures and proposals for reform. I will thus limit myself to making the following comments and observations.

The Secretary-General's report, which we welcome, is part of a larger agenda and continuous process of reforming our Organization. It therefore goes without saying that the structural, administrative and budgetary reforms presented by the Secretary-General are not in themselves a sufficient response to the need to adapt our Organization to the requirements of today's world. In fact, as the Secretary-General has rightly indicated, the reform of the United Nations will not be complete until the composition of the Security Council is modified and its efficiency and credibility are strengthened by improving its working methods and its decision-making process. Here, I am specifically referring to the veto power.

It is equally obvious that the reforms presented cannot succeed unless the General Assembly is revitalized. For that to happen, more than just cosmetic changes are required. It is imperative that we restore to the General Assembly, the truly universal and democratic organ of the Organization, its genuine role as described in the Charter. Its prerogatives should be maintained and respected by the other principal organs of the Organization, and its authority vis-à-vis those organs should be fully exercised in the area of the maintenance of peace and security, as well as with regard to economic, social and governance issues.

The reform process initiated by the Secretary-General, if we make good use of it, is likely to give our Organization a strategy for achieving concrete, tangible results. The United Nations programme of work needs, as a matter of fact, to be rationalized. It should be organized around the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and around the outcomes of the major conferences, particularly the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. These goals should be reflected in the Organization's medium-term plan and its programme budget in a way that is coherent and which allows us to measure the effective implementation of those goals by means of results indicators. However, those objectives should not replace other existing mandates. Rather, they should complement them within the framework of an integrated strategy based on the priorities identified by the Member States.

Such a strategy should allow us to avoid the overlapping within our Organization, which the Secretary-General describes in his report. That overlapping results in a waste of energy and resources, considerable loss of time and, to a certain degree, inconsistency among the decisions of the legislative bodies. All those factors combined diminish the efficiency of our Organization. We therefore support the Secretary- General's proposals to regroup certain agenda items, to present consolidated reports on closely related questions, to make use of new technologies and to end activities that are deemed to be useless. In that regard, we believe that such a rationalization, which we support in principle, must be carried out in consultation with Member States.

Development in all its dimensions should be central to the Organization's concerns. In fact, development should be the Organization's top priority. Every debate we have had has illustrated beyond doubt that the threats confronting our world cannot be alleviated or eliminated until people are freed from the yoke of poverty that usurps their right to basic human dignity. The right to development should be considered equal to other fundamental human rights and should be promoted through all of the activities of the United Nations system.

In that regard, we are pleased with the attention that the Secretary-General has given to activities aimed at benefiting Africa, as well as with his decision to designate an adviser for special assignments in Africa. We hope that the mandate to be given to that adviser will measure up to the expectations of African countries, in particular as they relate to the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

Reform should not be motivated by budgetary concerns. The Secretary-General has clearly indicated that his goal is neither to reduce the budget nor to respond to conditions imposed from outside. That is reassuring to us, and the Secretary-General has our full confidence. Nevertheless, we hope that the Member States will not impose financial considerations as determining factors in drawing up our reform programme.

The set of reforms put forth by the Secretary-General should be put into effect gradually and should be subject to systematic evaluation. We note that some aspects of the reform — particularly those associated with human rights and information — will be the subjects of further recommendations by the Secretary-General that will be based on studies to be submitted to him. We also note that some proposals, especially those related to the administrative and budgetary areas, still require further clarification. The issue of accountability also needs to be examined in more depth, and an adequate system of responsibility and control needs to be established. We also believe that the competent bodies of the General Assembly should also look at various technical issues further before the General Assembly takes a decision.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our appreciation for the new reforms proposed by the Secretary-General and by assuring the President of my delegation's full cooperation in the process of negotiation that he will initiate following our debate. We rely on him to preserve the transparency of that process and to ensure its openness.

Mr. Negroponte (United States): I am pleased to address the General Assembly today on the Secretary-General's latest initiative aimed at strengthening this indispensable Organization. I join others in thanking the Secretary-General for his dedicated stewardship. We also wish to offer our compliments to President Kavan for providing the opportunity to discuss this highly important issue.

Last Thursday, President Bush, in proclaiming United Nations Day in the United States, said that America joined the world in commemorating the founding of the Organization and in recognizing the profound impact it has had on our world. He also reaffirmed the dedication of the United States, as a founding Member, to advancing human rights, security and education throughout the world through the works of the United Nations. Many other nations have made similar proclamations. It is therefore most appropriate that we gather here, just a week later, to discuss and agree on how the United Nations is to fulfil its critical role in the years ahead. The United States has always believed that a strong, well-managed Organization focused on its most important priorities is essential to ensuring that the needs of Member States are fulfilled.

With the issuance of his latest report on reform, entitled "Strengthening the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), the Secretary-General has provided a new and valuable framework for pursuing a programme of continuous improvement in the Organization. While the United States has always endorsed the Secretary-General's concept that reform is a process, and not an event, we also believe in the need to quicken or re-enforce the process. Achieving modernization, effective oversight and the elimination of redundant and obsolete functions are integral steps in that process. For this reason, "An agenda for further change" is timely in providing a road map for improving the Organization's many programmes, structures and operations.

In recent years, considerable progress has been made in improving the working methods of the United Nations. The staff and structure of the Secretariat have been streamlined; important changes have been made in human resources management; the scales of assessment have been updated; peacekeeping management has become more efficient and effective and United Nations budgeting has become increasingly focused on results. The Secretary-General's latest report builds on those improvements to maximize the use of valuable resources and to ensure that the Organization's work is aligned closely with the Millennium Declaration Goals. We endorse his approach and his package of actions in their entirety. I would like to comment, however, on a few key elements.

We look forward to a thoroughly revised programme budget for 2004 and 2005 that will better

reflect the priorities of Member States. In the same vein, we are encouraged by the steps listed in the report to improve the budget process, including the critical function of programme evaluation.

The measures aimed at improving intergovernmental coordination and avoiding duplication are long overdue and also most welcome.

In the important field of human rights, actions to strengthen United Nations activities at the country level and to improve the overall management of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights deserve priority attention. We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's selection of Sergio Vieira de Mello as the new High Commissioner.

Repositioning public information and conference services is an essential component of a continuous improvement programme for the Organization, since they use an inordinate share of the overall budget and can make important contributions to substantive programmes and activities. We support the bold approach taken to rationalize conference services, to reduce the number and volume of reports produced and to address the question of the number of meetings held. We would expect a similarly innovative and aggressive approach to be followed for the public information function that could be implemented in less than three years.

Because people are the United Nations most important resource, we are especially attracted to the measures in the field of human resources. Accelerating recruitment, increasing the retention of qualified people and improving mobility are all welcome components of the initiative, while bearing in mind the standards of Article 101 of the United Nations Charter.

Without exception, the actions laid out by the Secretary-General to maintain the United Nations as a relevant and responsive institution are excellent ones. They are fully consistent with the authorities and responsibilities given to him as chief administrative officer by Member States. As he implements his plan, we pledge our support. We stand ready to assist in whatever way we can. We join with other members in the Hall in committing to making the Organization better and more responsive to the needs of the twenty-first century.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): To avoid any misunderstanding at any point in time about my remarks, let me stress at the outset that we fully support the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). We also support his call for a strategic decision on this matter and, at the same time, we also support the open and transparent procedures that the President has suggested for the implementation of, and follow-up to, the report. I will comment on the report specifically a little later in my remarks. I thought that, in the first half of my remarks, it would be useful to encourage a discussion at the strategic level on the issue of United Nations reform, as we have been called upon to provide a strategic decision.

Before doing that, I would like to mention a small personal anecdote. I might possibly be one of the few veterans of United Nations reform present here. In 1986 I was invited by the then President of the General Assembly to serve as a member of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts set up to reform the United Nations, which was known as the Group of 18. And one little story taught me a valuable lesson. When I served on the Group of 18, we looked very hard to try to find parts of the United Nations system that could be trimmed, cut off or shut down. We had great difficulties but, in the end, we managed to find one little-known United Nations committee that we thought was no longer necessary. If I remember correctly, I think it was the United Nations Committee on Taxation. We all agreed that that Committee was really not central to the work of the United Nations and that it could be shut down. On the last day of our meetings, just as we were about to adopt our report, the delegate of the United States walked in to say that he was terribly sorry but the United States Treasury had informed his delegation that they saw value in the continuation of the Committee on Taxation, and would we not mind if it were not shut down.

The moral of the story here is that United Nations reform is inherently difficult if we try to go for the specific items to be removed, because each Member State has a vested interest in one or another part of United Nations programmes. Therefore, before we go into the details, we need to do a strategic review from a sort of "helicopter perspective" to see how the United Nations looks in the world today and to look at its role.

Against that backdrop, I hope that the key question that we will try to address in this debate is

that of why we need to reform. I believe there may be five possible answers.

The first might be that we are trying to reform because the United Nations is too big or huge. That cannot be so because, as an Organization, the United Nations actually has a light footprint. If my memory is correct, the world's gross national product (GNP) today is about $30 trillion. The annual United Nations budget is $1.5 billion. If my quick calculation is also correct, that comes to 0.005 per cent of the global GNP. That is literally and metaphorically a drop in the ocean. So if it is merely a drop in the ocean, is the purpose of our reform to make that drop even smaller, or is it to make that drop a little bigger, given the increasing demands made upon the United Nations?

The second possibility may be that we are trying to reform the United Nations because it is too inefficient. Certainly, the United Nations bureaucracy must have its share of inefficiencies, and so forth. But as we try to reform the United Nations, are we clear in our minds about the benchmarks for progress? To which civil service in the world are we trying to compare the United Nations civil service? If it is inefficient, to which standards are we comparing it? Having worked quite closely in the Security Council with at least two departments — the Department for Public Information (DPI) and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations — I would say that, frankly, from my personal experience, those two Departments are possibly already world-class operations and perhaps could teach the rest of the world's civil services how to operate. So if we say that the United Nations is inefficient and needs to be improved, we need also to establish the standards necessary to be able to say that.

The third possible reason to reform may be that we are fundamentally going in the wrong direction as an Organization. If that were so, if the United Nations were fundamentally headed in the wrong direction, then why is it that every time we hold a summit all the heads of State and Government turn up here to fill the Hall with their presence? The reason they come here is that the United Nations serves very effectively as the spiritual centre of the intergovernmental process. Indeed, I would also say that, in one of the most crucial roles it plays, the United Nations is the leading temple of legitimacy to which all agendas have to be brought and legitimized. Whether in the areas of development, the environment or the fight against terrorism, whatever one's agenda, it must be brought to this Hall to have it legitimized before the global community cooperates. The fact that the world comes here to wrap its agendas in the mantle of United Nations legitimacy suggests that the United Nations may not be fundamentally going in the wrong direction.

The fourth possibility is that the priorities may be wrong, that the United Nations might, in a sense, have wrongly allocated its priorities. Frankly, this is an area in which we can have a real discussion to address, as Ambassador Kumalo said earlier in this meeting, "the suspicions and fears that the reform process seem to have provoked". But to address that we have to ask ourselves what the real priorities of the United Nations system are. In that regard, if we had to identify the first priority we could not state it better than the way it was stated in the intervention earlier today on behalf of the European Union: "The ultimate aim of our work in the United Nations is to make the world a better place for the poor people of the planet."

We endorse that call by the European Union. We also agree that the primary goal should be to ensure that the United Nations helps to make life better for the poor people of the planet. But if that is the case, we can indeed ask ourselves a very simple question: at present, are our priorities designed to achieve that? Of course, if we study the United Nations budget in detail, we might be able to get a sense of how much money really goes, or does not go, to helping the poor. One concrete suggestion I would like to make in this regard is to produce a pie chart that shows the percentage of the United Nations budget that goes to reducing global poverty and promoting development. That might clarify the picture and enable us to assess whether or not there are sufficient resources going to development activities.

The fifth possible reason for reform, one that I know is a delicate issue, may be that the major contributors are unhappy with the direction of the Organization. Unfortunately, there is more than a grain of truth in this observation. In the past few years, the reform process has been driven by the major contributors, who feel troubled by several different dimensions of the work of the United Nations. Indeed, as we heard in the statements made just this morning, there is a troubling North-South differentiation on the issue of United Nations reform. In our view, that need not be the case. It need not be the case that the North should be supporting reform and the South should be

suspicious. In our view, both the North and the South can be equally enthusiastic about supporting reform. But to achieve that, both the North and the South must develop a common mental framework of what the reform process is all about. We have got to be clear about what the goals are and what we are trying to achieve. We must also be clear about how reform serves the interests of everyone in the United Nations community — how it serves the North and how it serves the South. We hope that this will be one of the outcomes of this debate.

By the way, in that regard I would also like to mention and reinforce the point that was made in this debate by the Ambassador of Tunisia, Noureddine Mejdoub. About the effectiveness of the United Nations he said that it "is also conditioned by capacity to know how to reconcile, or sometimes to restrain, our national interests with, and for the sake of, the larger community's interest." That is our challenge in today's debate. Can we, in an effort to strengthen the United Nations, sometimes put aside our national interests for the sake of strengthening collective interests? We hope that this can be done.

There is one other point that I would like to touch on before turning specifically to the Secretary-General's report. In one of our earlier statements in the Hall regarding the revitalization of the Organization, we said that the United Nations rests on the tripod comprised of the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council. The report before us today frankly addresses in great detail the areas of reform pertinent to the Secretariat. It also addresses in great detail the areas of reform concerning the General Assembly. But there is little or no mention of the Security Council, even though the Council is today probably the single most important member of the United Nations family.

After having served almost two years on the Security Council, it is our observation that the Council can also do with administrative reforms. I think that, as many here have observed, we have tried to do that with the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly, in an effort to try to trim its length. In fact, we succeeded in cutting the report almost in half, saving the United Nations a few hundred thousand dollars in the process.

But let me be candid. While we expected that all members of the Council would have supported us, we were actually surprised to find that there was resistance. I can tell the Assembly that some of my colleagues almost literally had to sweat blood to get support to do something that we thought was very obvious, namely, trimming the report. The tragedy is that some of the States here supporting reform in the General Assembly and the Secretariat were resistant to reform in the Security Council. We think that if that becomes known, it would undermine the process of reform.

It is important that all three elements of the United Nations family — the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council — show an equal commitment to reform. By the way, that is why we support paragraph 21 of the Secretary-General's report, which concerns the need for the Security Council to codify its practices. We also support paragraphs 168 and 169, which deal with streamlining and the peacekeeping operations budget. Incidentally, we must remember that the budgets for peacekeeping operations are much larger than the regular budget. They, too, should be scrutinized.

Let me now turn to the report itself. We do want to commend the Secretary-General and, of course, the Deputy Secretary-General, for producing a concise and well-written report. I also want to say that it is eminently readable, as I read it over a weekend.

I will state upfront that our delegation is in agreement with the analysis presented and with most, if not all, of its 36 recommendations. Judging from the interventions made during the discussions on the agenda item concerning the revitalization of the General Assembly, no one would disagree with the Secretary-General's observation that the General Assembly remains weak. Frankly, the only question that we cannot answer in this debate is where the leadership will come from in terms of improving the General Assembly. The Secretary-General cannot provide that leadership. After all, he is a civil servant serving the Organization. If the General Assembly is to be improved and revitalized, that leadership must come from Member States. If it does not come from Member States, we then have to produce the leaders from the intergovernmental body to do so. We indeed hope that some will emerge. But in terms of making suggestions about how to make the Secretariat of the United Nations a more efficient organization, there is no doubt that the Secretary-General has come forward with many important suggestions.

We would like to add that in this process the Secretariat and Member States should see themselves as being in a symbiotic partnership. There must be trust on both sides. The Secretary-General is seeking more flexibility in implementing the mandates that we set. For our part, Member States must take a pragmatic approach and resist the urge to micromanage the Secretariat. In other words, I believe that we should all welcome the thrust of the Secretary-General's proposals and not take issue with too many details. While there are bound to be some specific concerns, we should not let this override the broader need for authorizing the Secretary-General to take expeditious action with regard to continuing the reform effort he started in 1997.

Certainly, there are several areas highlighted in the report — particularly the sections on reforming the budget process, human resources reform and the strengthening human rights — that will require more detailed information and further consideration by the General Assembly. We trust that, as he did during 1997, the Secretary-General will come up with an implementation plan that addresses those issues comprehensively.

In deciding how to proceed we must first be clear in our minds about which recommendations fall under the Secretary-General's authority as chief administrative officer and which areas require General Assembly approval. We support him in immediately implementing those that fall strictly within his mandate. As we will soon say in a speech at the Fourth Committee, those include, for example, the efforts made to revitalize DPI. In our view, there are perhaps only four or five actions — particularly those dealing with the budget — that will require action on our part.

Having said that, I hope that we in the Assembly will take a strategic decision on the report, as requested by the Secretary-General. That would be the correct approach, which is not to say that the details are unimportant. However, they can be dealt with in due course at a later stage. We believe that our immediate priority right now should be to send a clear message of support to the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, let me quote the Italian Statesman Niccolò Machiavelli. I know that Machiavelli is not necessarily quoted positively, but this is something he said that was positive: "Whoever desires constant success must change his conduct with the times". We hope that all three members of the United Nations tripod — the Secretariat, the General Assembly and the Security Council — will change with the times to ensure that the United Nations remains relevant and strong.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The future of the United Nations is uncertain. Its very existence is threatened by unilateralism. We must save the United Nations. At the same, we must carry out a thorough reform of the Organization that makes a daily reality of the sovereign equality of States, which today is no more than a mirage. In our opinion, the essential goal of reform is the democratization of the United Nations, based on the full respect of the Charter.

However, as aptly stated by the Secretary-General in his valuable report (A/57/387), there has hardly been any progress in the reform and democratization of the Security Council, after a sterile decade of negotiations and despite an overwhelming majority that is in what one representative called "general agreement" on the need to increase the Council's membership in order to remedy the under-representation of the developing countries, on the urgency of eliminating or least temporarily restricting the use of the anti-democratic and obsolete veto power and on the need for transparency in the Council's functioning, on behalf of all Member States, by replacing the secret confabulations known as informal consultations and finally adopting its eternally provisional rules of procedure.

The most necessary and urgent element of the reform of the United Nations is the democratization of the Security Council, whose lack of legitimacy and effectiveness, loss of credibility and double standards endanger the very existence of the Organization.

The revitalization of the General Assembly is also a decisive element of genuine reform of the United Nations. The United Nations will become more democratic and effective only when the General Assembly fully exercises its powers under the Charter. The vast majority of the Member States demand this. But, under the exclusionary, inequitable and untenable international order with which we are burdened, it is difficult for the Assembly to formulate thorough and effective action based on our common goals and on the shared interests of those of us who champion

multilateralism and who possess the strength of the great majority of votes.

Cuba also agrees that is necessary to create a United Nations that is more efficient and dynamic in carrying out the purposes and principles of the Charter, in effectively carrying out the priorities of the United Nations established by Member States and in responding to the various challenges that today's international situation imposes on Member States.

The reform of the Organization must be comprehensive and not be fundamentally confined to the administrative and managerial structure of the Secretariat. The reform must include all principal and subsidiary organs and must democratize them. It must take as its fundamental pillar the preservation of the universal, democratic and intergovernmental nature of the Organization.

The delegation of Cuba considers that the report of the Secretary-General, complemented by the proposals from Member States upon consideration of the report, is an appropriate basis for advancing that process.

Our delegation believes that the new measures must aim at implementing the priorities of the Millennium Declaration, as well as the outcome of other, equally important United Nations summits and conferences. In our opinion, the proposals put forward must be complemented by other initiatives aimed at promoting other priorities agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration and at other conferences. Some such proposals are discussed in the report, while others, lacking implementation measures, are not. Such is the case of the priorities related to the search for peace, security and disarmament; development and the eradication of poverty; the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development; and attention to the special needs of Africa.

We hope that the reform measures will lead to progress in promoting and strengthening the structures and activities of the United Nations and its funds and programmes to promote economic and social development, which have unfortunately been weakened and whose ever-limited resources have been reduced or reallocated towards other goals in recent years.

The General Assembly must identify measures to improve the efficiency of management — such measures are within the competence of the Secretary-General — and must support the immediate implementation of those measures through the relevant mandates, decisions and resolutions of the General Assembly. The delegation of Cuba reiterates its confidence in the Secretary-General and wishes him success in this endeavour.

As was aptly suggested by the Secretary-General, it is the General Assembly's task to decide which issues are within its competence and which belong to the other principal and subsidiary organs. With respect to the intergovernmental process, it is also the Assembly's task to rapidly establish effective parameters for the careful study of proposals and for taking decisions on them without unnecessary delays. The strengthening of the Assembly should begin precisely with the effective and complete exercise of the powers belong to it and to its subsidiary organs in deciding on the reform proposals.

The new reform proposals reflect and deepen the varied measures some of which were outlined or considered in 1997 and which reflect a delicate balance. Some of them have been the subject of recent decisions of the General Assembly and other organs, while agreement could not be reached on others. In that last category are, among others, setting time limits on mandates by means of the budgetary process and the rationalization of intergovernmental consideration of programme and budgetary questions, the promotion of a universal presence and the strengthening of activities on the ground of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the integration of mechanisms for financing and planning operational activities, selectiveness in publishing reports and electronic access to documents. We believe that because of their implications, these questions require careful study by the Assembly and other relevant organs before decision is taken.

In our opinion, the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies must work carefully, together with the Secretary-General, to clarify and to decide on the scope and form of the implementation of some of the measures, whose overall appearance may appear attractive but whose real effects will depend on the interpretation given to them and the actual context in which they are implemented.

For example, the proposals for shortening the time period of the medium-term plan, for suppressing

the Committee for Programme and Coordination, for modifying and simplifying the budgetary process and for creating more flexibility for reallocating resources among programmes and expenditure items are all measures that, due to their complexity and technical nature, must necessarily be studied by the relevant intergovernmental bodies.

As well, it seems that there is an attempt to redefine the priorities of the United Nations through preparing the upcoming budget based on one interpretation of the Millennium Declaration, without taking into account other relevant mandates such as the outcomes of equally important summits and conferences. Our delegation believes that this process must maintain and reaffirm the validity and usefulness of principal instruments such as the medium-term plan and its revisions.

Another essential idea, in the view of the Cuban delegation, is that of universality in the approach of recommended actions, which must be implemented in their entirety, with a system-wide vision, by all organs or all Member States according to the specific case. For example, with respect to the scope and system-wide perspective of actions 2, 4 and 5, perhaps we all agree on the appropriateness mentioned in the report of strengthening the capacity of Member States in the area of human rights. However, doubts arise when that is related to strengthening of United Nations actions at the country level. And when those actions interact with operational activities for development and their corresponding funds and programmes, it seems that the implementation of such measures becomes limited to developing countries and does not extend to industrialized countries, where much remains to be done at the national level to ensure the universal enjoyment of human rights. Furthermore, we should define more closely how the principle of consent would be applied in mixing actions of different natures when there are components of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights mixed with the offices and funds which are of a distinct and intergovernmental nature.

With regard to the integrated approach of these measures, the question arises of how to reconcile the proposed strengthening of the management and of the capacities of the High Commissioner's Office — which would appear to presuppose an increase of resources — with the goal entrusted to the Secretary-General of reviewing the management of this component of the Secretariat with a view to simplifying and rationalizing this machinery and its procedures within existing capacities and resources. It would be premature, for example, to take a position with regard to action 5 before the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services has been duly considered by the General Assembly.

The delegation of Cuba agrees with our President on the importance of the process of intergovernmental consideration of this report, that it be transparent and participative. Cuba repeats its readiness to participate in it dynamically, flexibly and constructively.

Mr. Kjørven (Norway): I am honoured to be speaking to the Assembly on such an important matter as strengthening the United Nations. The United Nations is a cornerstone of Norwegian foreign and development policy. Experience has taught us that the best way to promote peace and security, human rights and sustainable development is through multilateral cooperation. Effective multilateralism calls for a strong United Nations. Norway is therefore firmly committed to the efforts being undertaken by the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations.

Two years ago, the leaders of the world agreed on a common vision for the new century and a set of priorities to be achieved by 2015. It is of great concern to us that we are already falling behind in meeting these objectives, not least poverty reduction. It is also of concern to us that insufficient progress is being made in meeting the broader objectives of the Millennium Declaration in areas such as human rights, democracy, good governance, conflict resolution and the special needs of Africa. We need to heed the Secretary-General's warning that unless we make progress on a broader front, "the ringing words of the Declaration will serve only as grim reminders of the human needs neglected and promises unmet" (*A/57/270, para. 113*).

Our common objective is to make the United Nations a more effective multilateral instrument for pursuing the priorities set out in the Millennium Declaration. If we are to succeed in meeting the Millennium Development Goals, we must realize that we are all responsible for their implementation. This responsibility includes supporting and strengthening the United Nations capability to move the process forward.

Throughout his tenure, the Secretary-General has proven that he is committed to improving the United Nations. We see his proposals as a logical follow-up to the first reform process, started in 1997. We support the proposal to focus the Organization's attention on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and following up the recent world conferences.

Norway welcomes the emphasis in the report on the need to further strengthen the work on human rights within the United Nations, and we give this objective our full support. The promotion and protection of human rights worldwide are a fundamental task of this Organization. However, even though much progress has been made, a lot still remains to be done before we can truly say that human rights have been mainstreamed into the activities of the Organization. This includes areas such as humanitarian affairs, conflict prevention and peacekeeping. It is not enough to pay lip service to an abstract idea of full integration. We must continue to work on this, both in terms of our attitudes and in terms of our practical efforts. We are confident that the Secretary-General's proposed reforms will help us to achieve this aim.

Norway strongly supports the Secretary-General's emphasis on the importance of improving the coordination of United Nations activities at the country level. This should come as no surprise. These are ideas that have long been supported by Norway, and we think it is important that all United Nations activities are integrated, particularly in countries emerging from conflict.

We look forward to the completion of the implementation plan for the effective coordination among the various United Nations entities working in a given country by 2003. We see it as essential that that the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes working in each country are able to pool their resources and undertake joint programming. We welcome the proposed strengthening of the role and capacity of the Resident Coordinator, which in turn should facilitate such an enhanced effort to achieve a truly integrated United Nations country team.

However, successful coordination in the field must also include the major financial development institutions, mainly the IMF and the World Bank. There has been an increase in cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions in recent years as regards the development of national poverty reduction strategies. We strongly encourage and support the continuation and strengthening of this cooperation.

Public outreach is important for any organization, and no less so for the United Nations. We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's proposals for strengthening the United Nations public information activities and believe that this will both enhance public support for the United Nations and further the Organization's legitimacy and authority as our foremost multilateral institution.

In recent years, the United Nations has also strengthened its relationship with civil society and the private sector, recognizing the need to work together to achieve our common goals. We are pleased that the Secretary-General's report includes proposals to strengthen and organize the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and the private sector.

Reform is not about doing more with less or saving money. It is about being able to live up to great expectations by being efficient and focused, and with resources sufficient to do the job. The people of the world look to the United Nations to help solve their problems. We are responsible for providing the United Nations with the capacity to do so.

Since 1997, the Secretary-General has successfully implemented reforms that were under his competence. However, we, the Member States, have not done our share. We must reform the way we work in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in order to strengthen the United Nations as a whole. We should all take note of the Secretary-General's proposals in this regard.

The United Nations can only be as strong and assertive as Governments make it. Norway is fully committed to giving its full support to the proposals set out in the Secretary-General's report. We look forward to seeing them put into operation in the revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005. We urge all Member States to strongly endorse the Secretary-General's Reform Initiative.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations A/57/PV.39

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

39th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 30 October 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 52 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1)

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations. His resolve to enhance the centrality of the United Nations in international affairs reflects the aspirations of the world's peoples. The continuing process of reform and revitalization of our Organization is essential to enable it to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the new world that is emerging at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". We hope that this debate will help to shape an agreed and effective response to the important proposals and recommendations presented in the report.

Broadly, the report addresses three categories of issues. First, there are proposals that seek to streamline the functioning of the Secretariat and strengthen the work of the intergovernmental machinery. Such proposals should generally receive strong support from the Assembly. A second category are those proposals which have an impact on intergovernmental processes. On these, the Assembly should provide guidance to the Secretary-General, inter alia, through this debate. Then there is a third category of issues which require either clarification from the Secretariat or adequate intergovernmental consideration to enable the evolution of broadly acceptable decisions.

Let me explain Pakistan's views on some of the major issues covered in the Secretary-General's report.

We agree that United Nations programmes and actions should reflect the current and emerging priorities of the Organization. The Millennium Declaration presents an overarching vision which broadly reflects these priorities. However, it is inevitable that in a rapidly globalizing world, problems and priorities will continue to change and evolve.

We are glad that the Secretary-General has clarified that the priorities mentioned in his report reflect only an illustrative and not an exhaustive list. We believe that a broader and balanced list of priorities should be identified through this debate and the ensuing informal consultations for appropriate reflection in our decisions.

There is an obvious need to rationalize and streamline the human rights machinery of the United Nations. Action is required at least at three levels. First, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights needs to be considerably overhauled. We need to ensure that the funding of various human rights activities of the Office reflect the priorities set by Member States, and especially by the Commission on Human Rights. United Nations human rights programmes should

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normally all be financed through the regular budget. The balance between the promotion of civil and political and economic and social rights, including the right to development, needs to be promoted and maintained. Balance also needs to be introduced in the composition of the personnel of the Office of the High Commissioner.

Secondly, the numerous human rights mechanisms also need to be streamlined. At present there are about 30 special rapporteurs and representatives established by the Commission. The mandates of many of those mechanisms overlap, and every special rapporteur apparently seeks to cover every nook and cranny of the mandate he is assigned. Lengthy reports by the special rapporteurs are not subjected to any in-depth examination; nor do they evoke genuine dialogue. The Commission on Human Rights should be asked to recommend how these special mechanisms, which have proliferated, can be reduced in number and enhanced in efficiency and relevance.

Thirdly, the promotion of human rights at the country level needs to be pursued in a well-considered way. The introduction of human rights officers into United Nations country offices is not the best way to do that. Since such country offices exist mostly in the developing countries, it will reinforce the impression that human rights problems exist only in the developing world.

We support the restructuring of the Department of Public Information (DPI). The priority themes, from which will emerge the key United Nations messages, should be determined by the Committee on Information, not by DPI. We are not convinced of the viability of creating regional hubs — at least, not in some regions. In the first instance, the Committee on Information should formulate broad guidelines and criteria, to be applied in each region, bearing in mind the region's particularities.

We support the Secretary-General's proposal in section III to reduce the number of reports and meetings. The vast proliferation of both has overtaken the absorptive capabilities of small and even medium-sized delegations and is undermining the representational value of our deliberations and decisions. We trust that the production of concise reports will not take place at the cost of ensuring political balance or excluding issues in areas of importance to the developing countries.

We support, in principle, the steps proposed in section IV to improve field coordination. For the common programming suggested in action 14, it would be advisable to seek the views of the relevant United Nations agencies and countries concerned. We support the enhanced responsibility being given to the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa.

We would welcome the preparation and submission to the Economic and Social Council of a document clarifying the roles and responsibilities of various United Nations technical assistance programmes, with a view to their rationalization.

The Secretary-General's proposal to organize the relationship of the United Nations with civil society is a timely and important initiative. Civil society is playing an increasingly important role in economic and social development, governance and peace and security issues. However, the number of civil society organizations has increased exponentially in recent years. Not all organizations are of the same quality and credibility. To avail itself of their contribution, the United Nations needs to evaluate in greater depth the strengths and expertise of each organization and create mechanisms through which their contributions in relevant areas can be best obtained. We recommend that the Committee on Non-governmental Organizations of the Economic and Social Council, meeting at the level of permanent representative, should propose guidelines and actions for this purpose.

We share the Secretary-General's dissatisfaction with the planning and budgetary process of the United Nations. We are not fully convinced, however, that the solution proposed in the report is the best one. The present planning and budgetary process has worked fairly well for many years. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), which is a subsidiary body of both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, looks at the medium-term plan (MTP) from a programmatic perspective so as to ensure that the proposed programmes correspond to the mandates given by intergovernmental bodies. This is an extremely important role and serves as a check on the possible misinterpretation of intergovernmental mandates. The weakness is not the result of the process. It arises from the fact that representation on the CPC has not been of a level

conducive to examination of the MTP from a policy perspective. The MTP has also, traditionally, been a long document, and tedious to read and absorb. If we can ensure a more concise and strategic MTP, coupled with higher level participation in the CPC — for example, at the level of senior officials or permanent representatives — we would not need to overturn a tried and tested system in favour of a new and as yet unclear arrangement.

There may be other options that could serve the purpose, for example, making the CPC an expert body along the same lines as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. The Pakistani delegation proposes that this issue be discussed by an open-ended working group, meeting at the level of permanent representatives, assisted by experts, during the course of the fifty-seventh session, with a view to taking a decision at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly. With regard to human resource management, discussed in section VI of the report, Pakistan supports, in principle, measures which promote efficiency in the Secretariat and help to create a versatile and well-managed workforce employed on the basis of merit and competence and with due regard to geographical balance.

We understand that following this debate, Mr. President, you intend to hold informal discussions to draw up a draft resolution which will provide the Secretary-General with the strategic guidance he has sought from the General Assembly. The draft resolution to be adopted at this stage should incorporate the Assembly's responses to the different kinds of actions proposed in the Secretary-General's report. We look forward to your suggestion, Sir, about the mechanism you wish to use in proceeding to elaborate the decision of the General Assembly. We are confident that under your able leadership the process of negotiation will be transparent and inclusive, and ensure appropriate reflection of the views expressed by Member States in this debate.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): My delegation would like to commend the Secretary-General very highly for initiating the debate on this important item, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system". We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his role in respect of the report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", which is contained in document A/57/387. In that relatively short but concise report, which has helped to save a great deal in financial terms, she and her team have presented to the General Assembly a series of suggestions with the aim of making this Organization stronger and more effective so that it can achieve the goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration. Our delegation welcomes the report and wishes to make some observations on certain aspects of it.

The need for a strong and effective United Nations is becoming increasingly imperative in this century. It is obvious that the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration cannot be successfully pursued without strengthening the Organization. The reform process aimed at further rationalizing the structure of the United Nations, therefore, should be continued and accelerated. My delegation pledges its total support for the enhancement of the Organization's backbone organs, especially the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

As far as the General Assembly is concerned, we support recent steps aimed at improving its working methods, such as the decision to elect the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly, as well as the officers of the Main Committees, three months before the beginning of the regular session, or the practice of discussing interlinked items together during plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees.

With regard to the Security Council, we fully agree with the report that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Council. It is no secret that that organ should be more accountable to the General Assembly, more representative to reflect today's reality — through the expansion of both the non-permanent and permanent categories of its membership — and more democratic and more transparent in its working methods. While taking note of the improvements in the Council's working methods, such as the increased number of open meetings with the participation of non-Council members, we regret that the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council Reform has been unable to make any progress after a decade of discussion, leaving the painful impression that it is beating a dead horse.

Two years ago, the leaders of United Nations Member States defined the following as our priorities:

> "the fight for development for all the peoples of the world, the fight against poverty, ignorance and disease; the fight against injustice; the fight against violence, terror and crime; and the fight against the degradation ... of our common home." (*A/RES/55/2, para. 29*)

Undoubtedly, those priorities should be at the top of the United Nations agenda and our principal activities. Although the International Conference on Financing for Development, held at Monterrey, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, have somehow lived up to our expectations, we need more concrete actions and measures. We also need a mechanism to coordinate development efforts on a global scale to enable developing countries to take advantage of all the opportunities that globalization offers, especially with regard to trade and investment, and to ensure their greater involvement in the decision-making process.

In that context, we find that section II of the report, entitled "Doing what matters", appears somewhat unbalanced, since many vital issues — such as those of development and poverty eradication — have not been given the attention envisaged in the Millennium Declaration, while certain other issues have been singled out and addressed through very specific and concrete actions.

Concerning the organization of work of the Secretariat, it should be noted that the Secretary-General has proposed a large number of measures to that effect, such as streamlining reports, improving the planning of meetings, coordinating the activities of the Secretaries of the Main Committees, restructuring United Nations Information Centres, improving United Nations libraries and improving document management. My delegation is of the view that any reform in the direction of streamlining, rooting out redundancies and duplications, is to be encouraged and supported, provided that it does not involve financial implications and that concerns raised by Member States are adequately addressed.

Lastly but not least, my delegation shares the Secretary-General's view that the competence of staff ensures their vital contributions to the success of the Organization. We note with satisfaction that the Secretary- General is committed to the recruitment of qualified candidates from unrepresented or underrepresented countries. In that respect, we should like to see concrete measures to rectify the existing unbalanced recruiting mechanism.

In conclusion, I should like to express my delegation's highest appreciation of the Secretary-General's efforts to make the United Nations a stronger and more effective instrument in the service of people around the world. I assure him of my delegation's full cooperation and support, and I sincerely hope to warmly welcome him to Viet Nam sometime next year.

Mr. Kasemsarn (Thailand): I should like to begin by adding my voice to all those who have spoken before me in expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General for sharing with us his thoughts and plans in his report on strengthening of the United Nations system (A/57/387). I also wish to thank Ms. Louise Fréchette, Deputy Secretary-General, for giving Member countries further details on the issues raised in the report.

The report provides us with a broad overview of how the Secretary-General intends to bring about changes and improvement with regard to the Secretariat so that it can better serve the Organization and its Member States. It also raises some challenging questions regarding the revitalization of United Nations intergovernmental bodies with respect not only to their working methods but also to their relevance and effectiveness in dealing with the myriad challenges of the globalized world. Those thoughts and plans will certainly serve us well as we review the reform process of the entire Organization. Our debate today on this item is thus timely and significant, and it should also be viewed in the wider context of the reform of the Security Council and of the General Assembly.

My delegation commends the Secretary-General for pursuing this matter as one of his top priorities when he took office as chief executive of the Organization in 1997. Indeed, he has initiated many valuable improvements in the performance and functioning of the United Nations by reshaping, reorganizing and consolidating the Secretariat. Thailand welcomes those initiatives and will continue to support his efforts to bring about further improvements at the United Nations.

We believe that, as a universal multilateral institution, the United Nations needs to evolve with the changing times and landscape in order to remain effective and relevant. The Organization's reform process should be implemented with full consideration

of the aspirations and expectations of Member States, as well as of the various levels of development among them. My delegation should therefore like to offer some of our thoughts and ideas on ways to improve the functioning of the Organization.

First, it is my delegation's view that the Millennium Declaration and the major international Conferences of the past decade should serve as the road map for the United Nations in the elaboration of its programme of work. A thorough review of United Nations activities is needed to ensure that the Organization is properly focused on tackling urgent issues, such as globalization and its impact on development, poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS, human rights, the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking, and conflict prevention, and that it is able to produce tangible results. My delegation therefore hopes that the Secretary-General can offer a more comprehensive review of the Organization, taking into account these priority issues, so that its strengths and weaknesses can be assessed.

Secondly, Thailand welcomes the Secretary-General's plan to bring about greater coherence, efficiency and effectiveness among the various United Nations agencies and programmes in host countries. We support the idea of developing a common pooling of resources, joint programming, common databases and knowledge networks among the agencies and programmes without significant impact on the existing budget allocations. This approach is similar to the Thai Government's concept of chief executive officer for the administration of its public organizations abroad, which involves, inter alia, pooling resources and encouraging teamwork under a unified structure and command.

Thirdly, Thailand is of the opinion that the Secretary-General's plan to increase resources in real terms, aside from adjustments arising from inflation and currency changes, for the revised programme budget starting from the period 2002-2003, may not be feasible at this time. A number of developing and least-developed countries are still in the process of recovering from the financial crises of the late 1990s and, indeed, a few others are experiencing financial and economic difficulties at the moment. The principle of the capacity to pay of developing and least-developed countries, which make up the majority of the Members of this Organization, must be taken into account in all the deliberations on this issue. The approach we should be taking on this issue is to examine how to increase budget savings through reforms so that they can be used to maintain future programme budgets at the current level.

Fourthly, the Secretary-General's proposal to improve planning and budgeting systems by synchronizing the medium-term plan with the biennial proposed programme budget to cover two years seems pragmatic and sensible. This is also the case with regard to the Secretary-General's request for more flexibility in the reallocation of resources between programmes of up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period. Thailand hopes that such measures will lead to better financial management of the Organization. We also support the proposed plan to improve and simplify the planning and budgeting systems of regular and peacekeeping budgets, as well as voluntary trust funds, which are the main resources in implementing the Organization's programme of work.

Lastly, the issue of the human resources of the Organization is a matter of great interest and concern to all delegations. We fully support the mechanisms and incentives to improve the efficiency of human resources, particularly in the recruitment, promotion and remuneration processes. We also support the suggestion to abolish the restrictions on the number of General Service staff eligible for promotion to the Professional category and to raise the annual quota of P-2 posts available for successful G-to-P exam candidates to 25 per cent. My delegation hopes to see these suggestions implemented at the earliest opportunity without any restriction on or discrimination among any qualified General Service staff.

At this crucial period of changes and uncertainties, the United Nations, as a universal multilateral institution, represents the best hope of humanity for a more peaceful, caring and prosperous world. The ability of the Organization to live up to the expectations of the international community will depend on two important ingredients. One is the ability and readiness of the Secretariat, with its body of highly competent professional staff, to change and adapt to the ever-increasing demands placed on it. The other is the firm commitment of Member countries to support and contribute to the work of the Organization, which should be practical and commensurate with their limited resources. These two ingredients must

complement one another in order for the United Nations to remain relevant in these challenging times and to become an agent for more effective change in the service of humanity. Thailand remains steadfast in its support for a more effective and relevant United Nations and will continue to play its part to achieve this end.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for introducing his report. No item among those before the United Nations will be successful if we do not seek daily to strengthen the United Nations. That is why Colombia welcomes the report, which proposes a path to be followed and establishes a series of measures to be undertaken by the Secretary-General and by the main organs of the United Nations, particularly the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council.

My delegation recognizes the Organization's achievements in recent years on a broad spectrum of items. The leadership of the United Nations has been essential in making progress on such goals as the eradication of poverty and the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, as well as for the success of some peacekeeping operations, such as those in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Timor-Leste.

However, in order to make definitive progress in all areas of concern to the Organization and effectively to solve all the problems confronting the international community today, we need a greater commitment from the Member States to the United Nations. We must consider and apply such bold and ambitious ideas as those put forward by the Secretary-General to strengthen the Organization. We need to revitalize its main organs and to make them more efficient by aligning them with the realities of our peoples.

While the United Nations faces serious problems today, such as the weakening of multilateralism and the administrative and bureaucratic difficulties typical of a truly global Organization, there is no doubt that our peoples see the United Nations as a solid and respectable institution that responds, within its means, to the challenges it faces and that has incorporated into its field of action the contribution of various international State actors. Their views greatly revitalize and enrich the discussions on and search for solutions to the sensitive problems and issues on the global agenda.

However, a great deal remains to be done. That is why Colombia is participating and will continue to participate actively in informal open-ended consultations and groups to consider the Secretary-General's proposals. We will study the means put forward by the Secretary-General within his field of competence. We will promote the measures suggested by the Secretary-General and others that we consider to be useful to the revitalization of the General Assembly. A forum such as the General Assembly, whose universality and membership make it extremely important, must overcome the difficulties afflicting it today: the overlapping of items, repetitious and sterile debates and the negotiation of resolutions with little political impact, among others.

Another fundamental aspect that Member States must address in the process of strengthening the United Nations is reform of the Security Council in terms of both its methods of work and its membership. Colombia will continue to promote this process with a view to making the Security Council more representative in its membership and more flexible in its working methods.

In his report, the Secretary-General has presented a list of 36 actions or measures aimed at addressing the challenges arising from the shortcomings detected in the functioning of the Organization. The informal consultations that have begun on this item will provide the opportunity to refer to each of these actions in greater detail. Allow me for the time being to reiterate my delegation's willingness to consider and promote the reforms required by the United Nations, to which our peoples and Governments have assigned the difficult task of maintaining peace and security, solving the major problems on the international agenda, preserving the environment and promoting the economic and social development of humankind.

Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to say how much we in Kuwait appreciate the outstanding efforts that Secretary-General Kofi Annan is making to strengthen the role of the United Nations, to ensure its effectiveness, to make it dynamic and flexible in dealing with international changes and challenges and to enhance its ability to face up to those challenges, in line with the expectations of people the world over.

My delegation has studied the Secretary-General's report (A/57/387) on the item under

consideration, "Strengthening of the United Nations System". The report sets out actions that constitute the second phase of the reform strategy that the Secretary-General initiated when he assumed office in 1997. We also appreciate the Secretary-General's interest in the views of States on the issue. This important issue includes matters affecting our daily work at Headquarters. It must be considered carefully and appropriate agreed action should be taken in order to implement the measures proposed in the report.

Let me say, before discussing in detail the Secretary-General's report on reform, that Kuwait believes that it is important for us to reach agreement on the general principles to guide our approach in dealing with this issue. First, the reform process must be continuous and uninterrupted. It must take into consideration the principle of flexibility in formulating and implementing reform measures. Secondly, the viewpoints of all Member States must be considered on an equal footing. Actions ought to be debated in keeping with the principle of transparency.

Thirdly, we believe that the reform process is a collective responsibility to be shared between the Secretariat and Member States. Here, we underline the Secretariat's principal role in drawing the attention of States to issues and questions on which reform measures would be to everyone's benefit. We believe that frank interaction and dialogue between the Secretariat and Member States ought to be the method for approaching this issue.

Fourthly, the key factor to success in reform efforts is to take quick measures to implement without delay agreed reform proposals, and to postpone action on those issues not yet agreed upon.

The fifth principle is renewed belief that the United Nations is an intergovernmental Organization whose objective is to serve the peoples of the world. Therefore, the reform process must take into consideration the political dimensions of all issues. We believe that the reform process must be in line with the political reality of the positions of Member States. We do not believe that the corporate profit-making method can succeed in reforming an Organization such as the United Nations.

If we were to agree on those general principles, we could then base our work on them when we debate the technical details of the reform process proposed in the Secretary-General's report under consideration. Here, I propose that the President of the General Assembly concentrate first and foremost on action to be taken and on the approach to be adopted for consultations. Allow me to propose the following points in that regard: informal consultations could be held during which all the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report would be debated under an agenda set up for each meeting. Actions to be debated would be organized under the main headings of the report. Member States would be allowed to express their views on the technical aspects of each action. We would thus see which proposals enjoy the general agreement of Member States.

Secondly, Mr. President, you could follow up those meetings and debates through representatives whom you would appoint to assist you and pinpoint those measures and proposals that enjoy general agreement among Member States. These could subsequently be incorporated into a draft resolution for adoption and implementation as soon as Member States had completed their consultations on them.

Thirdly, I would propose that once the positions of States as expressed during the debate on the item have been analyzed, the proposals in the Secretary-General's report should be catogorized and listed to make it easier to deal with them through the draft resolution and subsequent action on the proposals.

Following a quick examination of the nature of the proposals in the report, my delegation believes that they can be divided as follows. The first category includes actions related to the prerogatives of the Secretary-General: ones he can take without ascertaining the views of Member States. Nevertheless, it is important for such actions to be included in any draft resolution to be adopted so that they can receive the blessing of Member States. The second category includes proposals related to urgent issues on which general agreement has been expressed by Member States in the debate. These include issues related to streamlining the work of the General Assembly, and to decreasing the number of reports and meetings by United Nations bodies. The third category includes technical proposals to be debated in the relevant technical bodies by members of those bodies and by other concerned Member States. The fourth category includes measures which, for the time being, have been set aside, and on which no urgent action can be taken. These include strategic issues and those related to the philosophy of the work of the United Nations. These

require in-depth study and Member States must be given sufficient time to consider them without adopting any action on them. Some examples are the role of civil society, partnership with the private sector, how to deal with United Nations staff members suffering from HIV/AIDS, measures regarding the Department of Public Information and other measures of great interest to all Member States. My delegation will contribute effectively and positively to the consultations to be held soon on the item. That will be an opportunity for us to clearly express our position on all measures proposed, particularly the ones my delegation supports and agrees with. First, we support the Secretary-General's ideas on a comprehensive approach to taking up items on the agenda of the United Nations. Secondly, we fully support all measures and proposals to alleviate the burden on Member States with small delegations and on the Secretariat, namely by reducing the number of meetings and reports and simplifying the working methods of all United Nations bodies, particularly the General Assembly. I call on the Assembly to adopt measures on those issues in a timely manner. Thirdly, we support strengthening the efficiency and capabilities of the United Nations staff without discrimination, considering that they are international civil servants, particularly General Service staff.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the Secretariat for measures taken in cooperation with Member States to streamline the activities of the General Assembly. The fruits of those efforts are already being enjoyed at this very session. We believe they are an example to be followed when taking up the Secretary-General's proposals contained in the report under consideration today.

At the same time, we must stress that our main objective is to continue consolidating the concept of a United Nations culture, which we have included in all school curricula in Kuwait. It is a concept that drives us — Member States or Secretariat employees, the true face of the Organization in the eyes of the peoples and Governments of the world — to achieve reform in the service of all.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan): We must be sensitive to the fact that the United Nations in the twenty-first century is a truly universal organization. In the fulfilment of this most crucial role and its Charter obligations, the United Nations is called upon to deal with multifarious issues. Those relate to peace and security, social welfare, the environment, sustainable economic development, poverty alleviation and a host of other issues that will impact our planet and the future of humankind for generations to come. That is indeed an onerous undertaking and responsibility. As diverse as the membership of this world body is, so is the agenda with which it is compelled to deal.

We need a United Nations that is inherently dynamic in its functioning. After all, the international issues that it is required to consider and deal with are ever changing and ever evolving. In such circumstances, an outdated structure cannot cope with the challenges of the times, and the bodies of the United Nations need reforms from time to time to face those new situations.

As mentioned by speakers before me, small delegations, especially those that have difficult manpower and financial positions, find it impossible to cope with the large number of meetings and the piles of documents that emanate from the United Nations. That matter has been noted in the Secretary-General's report in paragraphs 23 and 88. While meetings and documents are essential features of our work, the sheer volume of reports and the number of meetings are simply overwhelming. The question that we must pose is, have those reports and meetings served their legitimate and intended purposes? There is a need to closely and objectively look into that matter, and see how that untenable situation has come about and what the Member States and the Secretariat need to do to rectify the situation.

In paragraph 24, the Secretary-General stated that "Summit fatigue has set in", and, in a way, that is true. In the past, my delegation has cautioned against convening summit level meetings on too many issues or on matters on which the international community has not reached the stage when a summit becomes justified. In addition, summit decisions are not fully and properly implemented, making the credibility of summits questionable in the eyes of Governments and the general public. Any proposal for a summit should be carefully considered. Guidelines and criteria need to be established and an adequate period of time must be taken to access the requirement for a summit. There should be sound and credible reasons for involving the highest levels of our Governments. The Secretary-General might like to give his recommendations on the criteria for calling summits. I am sure that this will be helpful to Member States in taking suitable decisions.

An issue of critical importance in strengthening the United Nations system is the reform of the Security Council, which is long overdue. The Council must be made inclusive and democratic, and must also reflect the aspirations of the Member countries that were not there and not involved in setting up the Organization in 1945, over half a century ago. Many debates have taken place for nearly a decade on the need to reform this major organ, and yet proposals for substantive change have met with adamant resistance. The permanent, as well as the non-permanent, membership has to be expanded to reflect the universality of the United Nations. The issue of continuing with the veto power also deserves further and careful consideration.

The matter of financing the activities of the United Nations has been of great concern to Member States. On the one hand, Member States, whether it is in the Fifth Committee and the General Assembly or in the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and other concerned bodies, still do not seem to be able to exercise the degree of control felt necessary on the part of financial experts. That has resulted in many differences of opinion and misunderstandings between the Secretariat and the Member States, but this situation is a serious problem that needs to be addressed more realistically. The current system of control, review, checks and balances will have to be reformed in a manner that will give greater confidence to Member States and, at the same time, will enable the Secretary-General to function better financially.

The other point concerns the regular contributions of Member States based on their respective gross national product. In view of the diverse nature of the Organization's membership, there is no option but to maintain the current methods of financing for the regular budget. But all Member States must live up to their expectations and not create problems to pressure the international Organization.

That situation notwithstanding, the greatest problem is voluntary contributions needed to finance the activities of the United Nations. From a long-term perspective, it would be good to look seriously at the prospects for increasing, even if gradually, forms of independent financing for the United Nations in which national decisions become less relevant. There have already been some proposals on this. A more vigorous pursuit in this direction would serve the international community well. The Secretariat needs to look into this and advise Member States on the course of action that needs to be initiated.

As several speakers before me have expressed, in the reform process to be carried out by the Secretary-General, the question of representation of all Member States in the recruitment process has to be given added emphasis. Where they cannot put forward candidates or have no interest in doing so, then it is a different matter. But we must bear in mind that this is an international Organization, composed of 191 Members, and the character of the United Nations Secretariat and its bodies must and should reflect this reality. Unfortunately, proposals such as these are usually countered by arguments that this results in recruitment of mediocre third world personnel. Yes, there would be cultural differences, varied methods of working, and linguistic and other issues. But the United Nations recruitment process should be such that, leaving aside cultural and linguistic differences, which are obvious in a universal multilateral setting, only qualified persons are recruited whether from developed or developing countries.

I have taken the opportunity to address a few of the many points in the Secretary-General's report. My delegation takes this opportunity to commend Mr. Kofi Annan for the initiatives that he has taken in the reform of the United Nations. We thank him for the positive suggestions made and are confident that the report will be a most useful input in our efforts to bring about necessary reforms in this universal Organization.

Mr. Valdés (Chile)(*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by expressing our appreciation to the Secretary-General and his colleagues for the report on the reform of the United Nations that we are discussing today. I also wish to express at the outset our resolute support to the proposals submitted to us. We wish also to express our intention to contribute as far as possible to the promotion of vast support for the agenda for change proposed by the Secretary-General and make a contribution to the debate by introducing new ideas and improvements that will add to its success.

In our opinion there are many reasons that make it necessary to give unrestricted support for the effort that the Secretariat is proposing to us. First of all, there is the quality and the very contents of the report, which respond, as pointed out in its introduction, to a new way of working within the United Nations. Of equal importance, we feel, is the fact that the report reflects

requirements and agreements which are of long standing for Member States. This is an excellent example of the possibility for cooperation between Governments and the Secretariat, with a view to revitalizing the Organization.

We also believe that the proposals come from a Secretary-General who has demonstrated, through his outstanding management, a great capacity for administration; conducting with singular skill the implementation of his proposals agreed to in 1997. This ensures that, in observing the process of implementing this report as a joint effort, it will be possible to make the Organization capable of dealing with the international challenges of today — challenges which are probably the most difficult faced by the Organization since it was created.

The proposal to carry out at the United Nations the tasks that are truly important — by providing better service to Member States, by making progress at the same time in joint efforts and by investing resources in priorities — reflects a fortunate combination of substantive, practical and procedural issues, which surely makes the report commensurate with today's requirements.

It is true that the existence of the United Nations has rarely seemed more necessary than today, in view of the great tasks being faced by a globalized humanity. From combating poverty, achieving at least some degree of development for a vast majority of the planet, caring for the environment and fighting HIV/AIDS to preserving international peace and security, the United Nations seems more necessary every day.

However, we cannot disregard the fact that only rarely have the voices from different parts of the world, supported at times by powerful media, been heard as loudly as now, spreading a picture of multilateralism as a futile and wasteful undertaking; only rarely have these voices been so determined to disregard the legitimacy of miltilateralism, denying the need to see mankind as a whole, denying the urgent need to make progress through new institutions, in the task of creating greater cooperation in the international system. Chile understands that supporting the reform of the system is one way, perhaps the most effective way, of providing a clear response to those who believe or act in that way.

We are not disregarding the difficulties involved in promoting processes of change in international institutions. We know that frequently such attempts change run up against political realities that express t legitimate interests of many of their proponents. reality, this has been a recurrent situation in the Unit Nations where, frequently, concrete results achiev are not commensurate with the true needs of t Organization, although they are presented as such.

Therefore, we feel it is urgent to appeal for constructive spirit. We believe that nothing is mo legitimate than to explore the consequences of t proposals made by the Secretary-General, to seek provide information to the whole membership, suggest alternatives or indicate objections. Howeve we believe that any criticism should be introduced wi a constructive spirit, with full respect for the powe that are given to the Secretary-General under t Charter.

We wish to recognize before all else t importance of the fact that the report begins stressing that the Millennium Development Goa constitute the highest task of the Organization. F developing countries, it is extremely important that t Secretary-General persist in the road map and in t reports that measure both the progress and t limitations and failures being experienced on this pa towards overcoming poverty, ignorance and disease.

We also recognize the importance of analyzi the impact of globalization on development. Reduci the risks that it entails for the developing countries is fundamental task, not only in economic and soc terms, but also for ensuring the maintenance, if not t survival, of the values of human rights and democra as well as international security. In this area it necessary that there be a well-informed, frank deba among Member States, and to which the Secretariat c make a relevant contribution. In this connection and other areas related to economic developme interaction with the Bretton Woods institutions is necessity that the report rightly recognizes.

We also feel that of particular interest are t proposals intended to improve various aspects of t relationship between Governments and the Unit Nations system in the field of human rights. Here, it very important to call for the maintenance of the t purposes of the Commission on Human Rights, wh in recent years has been the subject of politi manipulation. Such manipulation is not beneficial

any way to the promotion and protection of human rights.

We acknowledge and appreciate the proposals aimed at improving the system of human rights in the United Nations and support for human rights in every country. We agree with the idea that the Office of the High Commissioner should be strengthened. We also propose that it prepare an annual report on the situation of human rights worldwide. Such a report would make it possible to depoliticize the debate within the Commission and help to facilitate bilateral dialogue on human rights in a more objective framework. Similarly, we believe that the initiatives proposed to reposition the Department of Public Information are relevant because, as the report indicates, public opinion should be an essential basis for strengthening the Organization.

We attach great value to the Secretary-General's suggestions for enhancing efforts to reform the working methods of the General Assembly. The report indicates the need to pursue the process of reform of the intergovernmental organs, deeming it to be a principal aspect of any process to strengthen the Organization. The Secretary-General's comments reiterate many of the points raised in the debates held on this item in the past two sessions of the General Assembly. It is to be recalled that the efforts to revitalize the General Assembly were relaunched at the fifty-first session with the adoption of resolution 51/241, which contains a set of measures to modernize this principal organ of the United Nations.

However, the process of implementing some of those commitments, which was intensified during Mr. Harri Holkeri's presidency of the General Assembly and continued with the greater participation of the membership during the presidency of Mr. Han Seung-soo, is still incomplete in many aspects. Particularly noteworthy among those aspects are the overloaded agenda, the reduction or elimination of duplication of work, and coordination among organs that deal with similar items from different perspectives. We fully support the efforts that you, Sir, are currently making to promote new steps on the path of General Assembly reform and we trust that they are supported by the entire membership.

On a different point, the Economic and Social Council has made progress in the search for functional norms appropriate to the goals and objectives of its current agenda. However, we believe that much ground remains to be covered. In that connection, while the efficient treatment of the agenda has been improved through the convening of various segments, we feel that the relationship between the results achieved by the Council and the work of the Second and Third Committees remains weak.

Furthermore, it would seem necessary to strengthen coordination within the Council, not only with the agencies of the United Nations system, but also in the relationship between them and the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council itself. The report rightly notes that it is also necessary for the General Assembly to clarify its responsibilities to the Economic and Social Council in connection with the integrated follow-up of major conferences of the United Nations.

At the same time, we fully endorse the idea that any reform of the United Nations will be incomplete without reform of the Security Council. We are ready to participate in efforts to resume exploring this issue and the relationship between the three main intergovernmental organs of the Organization.

I cannot conclude without referring briefly to the question of the budget. We feel that the affirmations made in the report are basically accurate. The duplication of tasks and the use of wasteful procedures that seriously hamper the consideration of priorities guiding the preparation of the budget are severe limitations on the functioning of the Organization. We understand that there are possible alternatives to the Secretariat's proposals, but we are interested in pursuing the promotion of a medium-term plan covering a shorter period; a budget that has clear strategic objectives; and an enhanced assessment system. We are prepared to consider in detail the proposals for flexibility in budget management, which we feel would be most constructive since they respond to a modern and updated approach to administration.

The report contains many other proposals that would require a great deal of commentary here. We understand that, with this debate, we are opening up an agenda of work that will require more detailed application. We advocate a resolution that will allow Member States to fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General. We could thus make more tangible our oft-stated intentions of creating an Organization that is adequate to the challenges of the new century.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish at the outset to associate myself with the statement made this morning by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his submission of the report in document A/57/387, and for its style, its formal features and its substance. As to the style, the document follows in the tradition launched by the landmark document entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century", prepared on the occasion of the Millennium Summit. Its language is crisp, precise and, at times, even eloquent, and the actions proposed are easy to understand. As to the content, we endorse the general thrust of the report, which builds on the reform proposal produced in 1997 in document A/51/950 and welcomed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/12.

In this respect, the Secretary-General reminds us once again that, in his opinion, "reform is a process, not an event" (*A/57/387, para. 196*). True to this idea, we find a package of proposals that point, in an incremental fashion, towards a more relevant, efficient and effective Organization with a clear sense of direction in terms of fulfilling the major objectives contained in the Charter. For those who believe in this gradualist but cumulative philosophy, the document will be found to be balanced, totally consistent with the actions undertaken since 1997, and endowed with additional proposals that will move the process forward, perhaps slowly, but surely. For those who prefer bolder changes, the document will no doubt be a disappointment.

My own delegation identifies, in a general manner, with the first group. In other words, we accept that we are embarked on a process that has already yielded important achievements and some shortcomings, and that the majority of the actions that are now being proposed to us are reasonable and consistent with the logic of reform initiated five years ago. In consequence, we subscribe to the actions being proposed, with some nuances that I will refer to presently.

Our only reservation to what was stated, and on which we would have preferred more outspokenness, relates to the inevitable need to reform the United Nations system of governance in tandem with reform of the Secretariat. For understandable reasons, the Secretary-General focuses his proposals on his own sphere of competence, limiting himself to "[venturing] some suggestions" (*para. 14*) on reform of the intergovernmental bodies. However, if we truly wanted to strengthen our Organization, we would have had to add a sixth section to the report, with more detailed proposals regarding how to adapt the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and, especially, the Security Council to a renewed vision of the United Nations for the twenty-first century. After all, nothing prevents the Secretary-General from taking the initiative to make proposals; it will be up to Governments whether or not to accept them.

I will comment briefly on the specific actions proposed, following the sequence of the report. To begin with, we agree that it is necessary to focus our efforts on priority items. Despite the extremely broad mandate of its Charter, the United Nations is no exception to the rule that every organization and every human activity must prioritize its activities. We share the view that the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation provide guidelines. The difficulty lies in the fact that the Millennium Development Goals, looked at individually, result in a wide thematic spread. In other words, if a particular intergovernmental forum wishes to address a specific topic it will undoubtedly be able to relate that topic to an element in the Millennium Development Goals.

But the Secretary-General's report offers modalities on which to base our priorities. The first set of modalities relates to our working methods, and are intended to ensure that we do not spend time on items whose inclusion in our agenda is based not on actual need, but on mere inertia.

The second is in the area of the allocation of resources. This is why we eagerly await what is offered in connection with action 1: a revised programme budget that better reflects the link between priorities and the activities to be undertaken.

Another point relating to section II is that it singles out two thematic areas — human rights and public information — for specific attention. Many will wonder why those particular activities were selected. But we must recognize that many delegations have long criticized productivity in these two thematic areas as being less than optimal. In that connection, we await the implementation of actions 2 to 5, consisting of

steps to be taken by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We share the Secretary-General's view that we can do much at the intergovernmental level to strengthen the functioning and credibility of the Commission on Human Rights. We take note of the measures under actions 6 to 10, which, in our view, fall within the mandate of the Secretary-General.

With regard to section III, which deals with the provision of Secretariat services to intergovernmental bodies, my points are the following. It is difficult to disagree with the substance of the measures proposed under actions 11 and 12, regarding reports. These measures nevertheless give rise to two questions. The first has to do with the criteria to be applied in order to "consolidate and regroup recurrent reports" (*para. 92*), who will define them and how they will be applied.

The second query raises the invariably delicate question of the limits of the authority of the Secretary-General vis-à-vis that of the intergovernmental bodies, since the consolidation and reorganization of reports could also affect the manner in which the agenda of the General Assembly is structured. All this calls for careful interaction between the Secretariat and the General Assembly.

In the same vein, and subject to the same reservations, it is difficult to disagree with the observations in paragraphs 100 to 108, which are, in a sense summarized in action 13, and all of which, again, fall within the purview of the Secretary-General. The only possible ingredient missing from the approach to programming and conferences is providing the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management with the discretion and flexibility required to ensure that a debate is not interrupted in its climactic phase by lack of services, for example, by withdrawing the interpreters at the very moment when a consensus is about to be reached at 6 p.m.

Regarding section IV, which aims for better coordination and coherence within the system, most of the measures are nothing more than an extension of policies initiated in 1997, nearly all of which, again, fall within the purview of the Secretary-General. We recognize that defining who does what within an organization as wide-ranging and complex as the United Nations is a challenge of the highest order. We also recognize that, as the Secretary-General points out, the steps taken during the past five years, while going in the right direction, are insufficient. Thus, there can certainly be no objection to carrying forward what has been initiated.

We would add four brief observations. First, paragraph 115 underestimates the potential of the regional commissions to contribute to the strengthening of the United Nations. In fact, the few lines devoted to the regional approach add nothing to what has been said in prior reports. We would have wished to see in the report, at least, the intention to give the regional commissions a more significant role in the provision of technical cooperation, since their presence in the field grants them a certain comparative advantage in doing this, as the Secretary-General himself recognizes in paragraph 123. We therefore look forward with interest to the outcome of action 15.

Secondly, we agree with the Secretary-General's idea that coordination at the level of each country is the most important factor in introducing coherence to the support the Organization provides its Member countries. The establishment of the United Nations Development Group was certainly a very important step in the right direction. We look forward with interest to the proposal enunciated in action 14 to strengthen the Organization's effectiveness in developing countries.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador), Vice-President took the Chair.

Thirdly, we agree with the creation of a new post at the level of Assistant Secretary-General to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. We believe that the consolidation of the three economic departments in existence prior to 1997 into a single entity brought together too many responsibilities — in terms of both volume and variety — in a single administrative unit. Enhancing the Department's capacity to organize its work around specific functions therefore makes considerable sense. The same goes for action 17, which we also support.

Finally in this area, we endorse the idea of pursuing the recent trend to further involve civil society and the business sector in the work of the United Nations. At the same time, we appreciate the practical difficulties that this involves, as well as the resistance it has encountered in some quarters. We therefore support the establishment of the panel of eminent persons referred to in action 19.

As to section V, which deals with the planning and budgeting process, this contains the potentially most far-reaching proposals of the entire report. I must say right away that we generally support those proposals. It is essential that we continue and expand the reforms already initiated in this field, both in the areas of results-based budgeting and human resources. We endorse the Secretary-General's observation that "The goal we should pursue is to make planning and budgeting real strategic instruments in the service of the priorities and the programme of work of the Organization" (*A/57/387, para. 154*). We also endorse the evaluation put forth in paragraphs 155 to 165.

Accordingly, we feel that the proposals contained in actions 21 and 22 deserve our support, although the details require further clarification. Moreover, I would venture to propose that those proposals should be considered at the highest level of representation of our missions, given that their implications extend well beyond the jurisdiction of any of the specialized commissions.

Turning quickly to the last section, I do not wish to extend my remarks any further. Suffice it to say that we agree with the Secretary-General on the need for us to be able to rely on an excellent staff. Many of the measures proposed in this regard fall within the purview of the Secretary-General. We have no major objections to the steps announced. On the other hand, with regard to the recommendations that require the approval of Governments, we have some doubts about action 26. We shall indicate the nature of those doubts in due course. We also support the Secretary-General's proposal for an independent review of the International Civil Service Commission.

I wish to conclude with a general observation on the entire report. The report tends to underestimate the enormous force exerted by inertia as a factor hindering progress towards translating the report's proposals into reality. That inertia exists within the Secretariat and, in a similar or even more pronounced way, in our intergovernmental forums. That inertia is due to intangible elements that are difficult to overcome: habit, vested interests, natural resistance to change, personal and group agendas and many more such elements. This factor is present in any human endeavour and should not surprise us. But the point is that the reforms sought require not only changes in norms, rules and provisions; they also require changing attitudes. It is therefore up to all of us whether or not the forward-looking vision that the Secretary-General presents in his report becomes a reality.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). We commend him on his tireless efforts to reform the Organization. Our thanks also go to the President for arranging this timely plenary debate on such an important question.

China associates itself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In addition, I would like to make the following observations with regard to the Secretary-General's report.

First, United Nations reform should attach equal importance to questions pertaining to the maintenance of peace and security and those related to development, the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable development. We support the Secretary-General's proposal to align United Nations activities with such priorities as implementing the Millennium Development Goals and providing an effective response to the challenges of globalization and its impact on development. This is in line with the desires of the Organization's membership, and in particular with those of developing countries. We hope that the Secretary-General will now formulate practical and feasible recommendations, and take effective measures, aimed at the reaching the Goals. That includes, among other things, devoting more resources to development, mobilizing developed countries to increase official development assistance, further opening up markets, eliminating certain trade barriers and ensuring that globalization benefits all countries. All this should be reflected in the United Nations operational arrangements, programmes and resource allocation.

Secondly, China supports reducing the number of Secretariat reports and imposing page limits, while improving their quality, namely, by placing greater emphasis on analysis and recommendations. We also support a reduction in the number of meetings and improving the quality of conference services. We hope that the Secretary-General's recommendations will be taken fully into account when the item of the revitalization of the General Assembly is taken up. We also endorse many other recommendations contained in the report, such as those related to the restructuring of the Department of Public Information, the improved

management of United Nations libraries and enhanced coordination among United Nations bodies.

Thirdly, the financial planning and budgetary process of the United Nations needs streamlining in order to be more in line with reality and real needs and to improve the effectiveness of its work. At the same time, we believe that the Committee for Programme and Coordination should continue to play a special role in the financial planning and budgetary process of the United Nations. When considering that item, we must make sure that decision-making on financial matters ultimately rests with Member States and that the views of the developing Member States are valued.

Fourthly, the proposed inclusion of the human rights question in United Nations development assistance programmes at the country level has caused serious concern among the developing countries. Human rights questions are distinct from those relating to development assistance programmes. We are not in favour of lumping the two together. China supports United Nations activities that promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. But human rights programmes must be suited to the specific conditions of the countries concerned. Full importance must be attached to the realization of the right to development and the views of Governments concerned must be respected.

Fifthly, we support the establishment of a panel of eminent persons to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and to offer practical recommendations for improved modalities of interaction. In conducting such a review, the panel should bear in mind the need to support and improve relations between civil society and the United Nations, squarely face the problems that have emerged and widely solicit the views of the membership.

Sixthly, all States have a vital stake in United Nations reform and they should be assured of equal participation in reform-related deliberations and consultations. The General Assembly could consider adoption at this session of a draft resolution containing elements acceptable to all, with a view to maintaining the momentum of reforms now under way.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): At the Millennium Summit, our leaders pledged to make the United Nations a more effective institution for the promotion of world peace and sustainable development. They were conscious of the potential and weaknesses of the Organization when they issued their solemn Declaration. In essence, the Millennium Declaration was a reaffirmation of our leaders' faith in the efficacy and relevance of the United Nations in protecting humanity from self-destruction.

In an ever-changing world full of challenges, the United Nations remains the only credible multilateral institution that guarantees universality, equality, peace and the prosperity of States. Some of the challenges that confront us today, complex yet urgent, were inconceivable 50 years ago. The challenges can only be met through a revitalized and strengthened United Nations.

It was for that reason that, five years ago, our Organization embarked on a process of reform. Since then, the world community has come to expect more far-reaching changes within the United Nations and its constituent bodies. Accountability, transparency, consistency and inclusiveness, as well as efficiency and effectiveness, remain the focal principles behind the reforms. As the United Nations continues on that track, it should place the needs of its Member States above everything else, while the quality of its services, provided through the Secretariat, should be of a professional standard comparable to none.

My delegation associates itself with the views expressed earlier by the chairs of the African Group, the Movement of the Non-Aligned Countries and the African Union, as well as the Group of 77 and China, but it would, nonetheless, like to specifically address the following issues contained in the report.

Regarding peacekeeping efforts, Nigeria notes the determined efforts of the Secretary-General to press on with the revitalization of the United Nations. His efforts are beginning to yield dividends. The reorganization and enhancement of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has resulted in the improvement of the capacity of the United Nations to deploy and manage complex peacekeeping and peace-building operations. In that regard, Sierra Leone is a success story, where the United Nations effectively took over peacekeeping operations from the Monitoring Group of the Economic Community of West African States and succeeded in the restoration of normalcy after a bitter conflict and civil war. The peace processes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola are further proof of the results and benefits of the reforms. While acknowledging those modest

achievements, we must not forget the painful lessons of Rwanda in 1994, when the United Nations developed cold feet and allowed mindless acts of the most grotesque form of genocide to go unchallenged.

Concerning General Assembly reform, the Assembly, as the highest legislative organ of the United Nations, needs to maintain its universality. Any reform in the United Nations must seek to strengthen that unique organ, rather than weaken it. Nigeria applauds the modest achievements recorded so far in the revitalization process. It is our view that, although the streamlining of the activities of the Assembly — especially with respect to meetings, clustering of agenda items, early election of the Assembly President and Main Committee Chairmen — has proven useful, a lot still needs to be done, particularly with regard to the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the Assembly. As we all know, the Assembly is the main deliberative and legislative organ of the United Nations. For that reason, it should be strengthened in order for it to assume a greater decision-making role within the Organization, to give its Members more say and to preserve multilateralism.

With regard to enhancing the Economic and Social Council, we agree with the view of the Secretary-General on globalization. It poses serious challenges to mankind. While we do not doubt the potentials inherent in globalization, we are gravely concerned about its effects and consequences. We are witnesses to the ever-widening divide between the rich and poor countries and between different regions in an ever-shrinking world. Living as we do in a world governed by cyber-technology, there is an urgent need to find ways to make globalization more beneficial for the greater majority of humanity. We believe that the United Nations can play a leading role in that direction. The Organization must also show more leadership in helping find durable solutions to developmental problems such as external debt, market access, technology transfer, human development and capacity-building for developing countries. It is necessary to keep those issues on the priority list of a revitalized and strengthened United Nations system.

Another area where the United Nations can be and is already playing a commendable role is in building strong partnerships. We note the partnership between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations, as well as non-State actors such as civil society organizations, voluntary agencies, interest groups and philanthropic foundations, universities and individuals. This deliberate outreach strategy has sensitized the peoples of the world to the objectives of the United Nations and has, in turn, contributed to success in monitoring international peace and security.

In the wake of the Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, partnership initiatives would form part of the implementation strategies of national Governments in fulfilling their commitments. Thus, the United Nations should position itself to monitor and to follow up on the partnerships as they unfold around the world. In particular, the Economic and Social Council must elaborate an effective strategy to follow up on international conferences without necessarily whittling away at the role of its subsidiary bodies.

With respect to human rights, Nigeria endorses the view that the United Nations provides a unique institutional framework to develop and promote human rights, norms and practices, while respecting national and cultural diversities. We believe that the promotion and protection of human rights is necessary for the realization of the United Nations vision of a just and peaceful world. Nigeria therefore supports the Secretary-General's view that the building of strong human rights institutions at the national level is the only way to ensure the protection and advancement of basic human rights.

With respect to the special needs of Africa, we commend the Secretary-General for keeping alive the spirit of the Millennium Declaration, which recognizes Africa's special needs. In this regard, we note the proposal to assign to the Secretary-General's Advisor for Special Assignments in Africa the responsibilities of coordinating and guiding reports and input on Africa-related matters and on Least Developed Countries through the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries (OSCAL). However, we would expect the Secretary-General to elaborate further on how the United Nations would sensitize and mobilize system-wide support, as well as mobilize resources for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In our opinion, the success and sustenance of NEPAD should be given full and unequivocal attention by the United Nations system, especially now that NEPAD has become the overall policy framework

within which the United Nations and the international community will channel support for Africa.

With respect to allocating resources, Nigeria welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at streamlining the planning and budgeting system. The need for creating real strategic instruments and achieving greater effectiveness should, however, not preclude the retention of priorities contained in the Millennium Assembly Goals, enunciated in the medium-term plan and other legislative mandates. Furthermore, adequate programme planning, evaluation and implementation monitoring should be enhanced through a well-articulated intergovernmental process. In that regard, the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be encouraged to fine-tune its working methods to enhance its performance.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's bold initiative on planning, managing meetings and documentation, provided such actions do not undermine the ability of Member States to take well-informed decisions and that hard copies will remain available to all Member States, as not all countries are able to take full advantage of electronic technology.

Nigeria is not adverse to the desirability of giving the Secretary-General the necessary prerogative to reallocate human and material resources of the United Nations as he deems appropriate. To do otherwise would undermine his capacity to deliver results. However, we believe that such authorization should be done in relation to the allocation of funds and resources for social and economic programmes and projects, in accordance with the proper mechanisms of accountability and monitoring.

On human resource management, Nigeria supports the idea of deserving staff being encouraged to attain their career objectives. We therefore support the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category, and we call upon the Secretary-General to fully explore ways to increase the number of General Service or eligible posts among those not subject to geographical distribution.

With respect to Security Council reform, as we have stated on previous occasions, Nigeria believes that the Security Council needs to be reformed, expanded and made more representative. While we note some improvement in its working methods and regular consultations with non-members, external actors and troop-contributing countries, we still hold the view that the Council needs to be expanded in both the permanent and non-permanent categories. We commend the Council's role in conflict prevention, resolution and peace-building, and we pledge our support in those efforts.

Finally, we thank the Secretary-General for his report, especially the strategies articulated in it for revitalizing the Organization. Nigeria will continue to support all efforts to enable the United Nations to live up to the expectation of its Member States.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretary-General for the preparation and presentation of the report on the strengthening of the United Nations (A/57/387 and Corr.1).

Without any doubt, 57 years after its creation, the United Nations requires thorough reform. The Organization has grown enormously over that long period of time. Its functions have been expanded. It has explored to the fullest extent the possibilities enshrined in its Charter. It has developed innumerable programmes and new mandates. It has undertaken additional obligations, and numerous institutional mechanisms have been created to respond to the new demands. Similarly, many programmes have been abandoned or have lost their relevance. Many mandates have been overtaken by the quick pace of history. Many departments have lost their raison d'être, while others that are still necessary have lost the political support of the international community.

For more than half a century, the Organization has been the sounding board for various conflicts and the events of international politics. Its organizational structure and budget reflect the scars of recent history. Some of its functions and tasks no longer correspond to the current needs of humankind, while others reflect the ideological struggles and political concepts of times gone by.

The Organization's growth has been disorderly. It has lacked a strategic vision and a unified conceptual framework to guide that growth. The Organization has survived, and it has adapted. But we cannot say that it has learned or that it has evolved. In this sense, my delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to launch a review process in order to increase the Organization's efficiency and give a new impetus to its activities.

When we consider the reform and strengthening process, we must keep in mind the particular nature of the Organization. The United Nations is not a private corporation seeking financial gains, but a public institution at the service of the Member States composing it and the people those Members represent. Unquestionably, some reforms that would make sense from a purely administrative point of view are not compatible with the political demands on the Organization. Any reform of the Organization must be designed to improve the quality of services provided to the Member States and to implement faithfully their legislative mandates. In this context, my delegation welcomes the proposals embodied in the Secretary-General's report as a first step in a process of dialog between the Secretariat and Member States to decide, in due time, which measures it will be appropriate to implement in order to strengthen the Organization. However, we are fully aware that this process requires a detailed and careful consideration of the proposals embodied in the report by all the competent intergovernmental bodies.

For this reason we do not think it appropriate to endorse any of the proposals without having first considered all their operational and budgetary implications. Similarly, we would be concerned by the unilateral implementation of these measures by the Secretariat without having an express mandate from Member States. Furthermore, we wonder what the impact of these measures will be on the existing legislative mandates duly adopted by the Member States.

Clearly, we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to give priority to those activities that promote the attainment of the goals enshrined in the Millennium Declaration and in the plans of action of the most recent global summits. However, the adoption of a new list of priorities should not lead the Secretariat automatically to discard the mandates adopted by the principal intergovernmental bodies of the Organization. From a constitutional standpoint, the General Assembly must approve, expressly and in a detailed fashion, the new priorities and the changes to the existing mandates. The possible adoption of limits or sunset provisions, suggested in paragraph 44 of the report (document A/57/387), is a prerogative that the intergovernmental bodies have yet to exercise.

My delegation finds that some of the proposed measures are timely. We agree with the Secretary-General that it is necessary to improve the working mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights to make it more effective. Similarly, we welcome his intention to study ways to rationalize the presentation of national reports to the human rights treaty bodies. We value his intention to improve the coordination among the various organs within the system as well as his efforts to give more incentives and to rejuvenate the Organization's staff with a view to providing better service to the Member States.

Nevertheless, we have some doubts regarding other recommendations. The proposals to make more flexible the transfer of resources and staff, up to 10 per cent of the budget, and to give greater authority to programme managers to oversee the funds assigned to them seem contrary to the best practices in the management of public funds and would require substantial oversight and evaluation measures. Moreover, these measures would jeopardize the implementation of the mandates approved by intergovernmental bodies. It could be asked, for instance, what is currently happening to the funds assigned to the preparation of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. We have heard that those funds are informally reassigned to other programmes, ignoring the express mandate of Member States to update it. It is therefore not surprising that there are delays in its publication. My delegation supports the strengthening of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, as well as the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

The suggestion to reduce the number of meetings and reports is somewhat simplistic. The meetings currently held and the reports currently produced respond to the requirements of the various intergovernmental organs. Therefore, the organ in question must approve any reduction, after considering each particular case. As a consequence, we cannot accept the concept of discretion as proposed in paragraph 96 of the report. True reform should, in fact, ensure that the reports provide the most updated data and contain greater substantive analysis.

The suggestion to combine the management of conferences and Secretariat services under the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management ignores the operational and technical need of the various bodies. Nobody has proposed, for instance, to unify the Secretariat of the Security Council with that of the General Assembly because it

would jeopardize the quality of the services provided. Similarly, the technical secretariat of the various committees should not be combined under the same Department without guaranteeing the continuity and quality of the services provided.

We view with interest the proposal to create an alliance with non-governmental organizations and the private sector. However, this task requires great caution. The Organization should be open to all such entities, allowing the expression of various positions and viewpoints. We should not, however, allow the private agenda of any individual non-governmental organization to usurp the agenda of the United Nations. Moreover, we should emphasize that those entities cannot be substitutes for democratically elected Governments. Only representative Governments with a clear democratic mandate represent their peoples legitimately.

From a procedural standpoint my delegation is in favor of the creation of an open-ended working group to consider the main proposals of the report, while the Main Committees of the General Assembly consider those recommendations that fall within their competence. In particular, we would like to receive a detailed analysis of these proposals from the ACABQ and to know the budgetary impact of each of them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now invite the representative of the Russian Federation to take the floor.

Mr. Gatilov (Russia)(*spoke in Russian*): Russia welcomes the Secretary-General's report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387) which, based on the recent progress in past years, offers a package to enhance the efficiency of the United Nations. We share those views and recommendations that provide for practical steps to further reform the United Nations and enhance its capacity to respond to global challenges.

In this regard, we support the concept of strengthened coordination within the United Nations system and interaction among its key components. We believe that the efforts to achieve this goal should focus on formulating a consolidated response to new challenges and threats, primarily those posed by the international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The recent tragic events, particularly in Indonesia and Moscow, demonstrated once again to the world the unprecedented cruelty of terrorists who sow death and destruction and their readiness to sacrifice lives of innocent people. Effective counter-terrorism cannot be successful without concerted efforts of the entire international community and a special role in this respect that should be played by the United Nations.

We share the Secretary-General's positive assessment of the efforts within the United Nations to improve the peacekeeping activities of the Organization, his desire to put particular emphasis on developing United Nations anti-crisis mechanisms to conduct multifunctional peacekeeping operations and effective division of labour between the United Nations and regional organizations.

We acknowledge the need to strengthen the role of the General Assembly, in particular by rationalizing its agenda. We share the view that the reform of the Security Council should not lead just to an increase in its membership, since the success of the Security Council's work depends, to no small degree, on its ability to take prompt and effective decisions. In any case, the broadest possible agreement on Security Council reform should be sought without counter-productive haste.

We believe that it would be more logical to codify the measures taken by the Council to improve its working methods and procedures within the framework of the overall Security Council reform package at a more advanced stage in this process. Referring to conflict prevention and settlement, the Secretary-General is right to highlight the need to coordinate, as needed, interaction between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and to clearly define the roles of the Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat.

The improvement of the United Nations human rights-related activities identified in the report is a top priority. The actions proposed in this area are balanced and realistic, especially those aimed at streamlining procedures for reporting on the part of Governments on the implementation of all international human-rights treaties and at improving special procedures with regard to human rights.

We commend the Secretary-General's appeal to depoliticize and make more effective the work of the Commission on Human Rights. We believe that the fulfilment of the tasks assigned to the United Nations

High Commissioner for Human Rights will lead to enhanced effectiveness of the bodies established by human-rights treaties and system of special procedures on human rights. It is important to ensure that relevant recommendations on the part of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are made in close cooperation with all States concerned, fully taking into account their remarks and proposals, and that the programmes on strengthening the human rights-related actions at the country level are aimed at helping countries develop their capabilities, particularly in the protection of human rights.

In the economic field, we support the proposal to single out globalization as a key area, so as to seize the opportunities it offers in international trade and in attracting foreign investment. We approve of the measures to re-enforce the role of the Economic and Social Council and deepen its dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, including in the format of annual meetings between them and the United Nations.

We believe it would make sense to have a clearer division of responsibilities among the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions in the social and economic area with a view to coordinating efforts to implement decisions of the United Nations conferences and summits. We support the optimization of the agenda and working methods of the Second Committee, as well as measures to consolidate the reporting on social and economic issues, including the identification of crosscutting themes relevant to both the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly.

We welcome the strengthened cooperation between the United Nations and private sector, including the proposal to create to this end a Partnerships Office. At the same time, we are not absolutely sure whether it is necessary to strengthen the Secretariat's planning machinery in the social and economic sectors. We think that the existing divisions in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs cope with these issues quite well. We also wish to point out that the report says nothing about supporting countries with economies in transition, although this subject is important given the specific nature of the social and economic problems these countries face.

As regards the interaction between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to establish a panel of eminent persons to review the relationship between the United Nations and civil society and offer practical recommendations in this regard. We wish to state that Russia is ready to nominate a highly qualified candidate to work on this panel.

We also took note of the Secretary-General's proposal to reform the public information system in several ways simultaneously: organizational change in the Department of the Secretariat, optimization of United Nations publications, restructuring United Nations Information Centres through their consolidation into regional hubs, starting with Western European countries.

However, we have serious doubts about the idea of integrating the United Nations libraries under the umbrella of the Dag Hammarskjöld Library in New York and assigning it the function of policy setting and coordinating the work in this area of the Organization's activities. To be perfectly frank, this kind of rigid centralization will only harm the efficiency of library services designed for the benefit of the Member States and weaken the United Nations role in providing these services to other international organizations, non-governmental institutions and the public. Local specificity, which is important for the fruitful use of these libraries, would be lost. Therefore, we deem it necessary to study this proposal in all its aspects and in detail, first of all from the standpoint of the consequences implied in these changes.

As for the report's section on improving conference services, our assumption is that the set of action proposed will be considered during the discussion of the annual resolution of the General Assembly on the pattern of conferences. At this stage we wish to stress the importance of preserving and strengthening the existing United Nations principles of conference services and the division of authority and functions between the corresponding departments in New York and the United Nations offices in Vienna, Geneva and Nairobi in this area.

It was somewhat unexpected for us to see in some sections of the new Secretary-General's report on reforms a trend towards centralizing functions, powers and lines of authority in the areas of conference services and public information. Furthermore, Action 32 and the section on further efforts to improve management speak of developing, not curtailing, the

concept of the delegation of authority. Besides that, "the premise that giving managers more authority and responsibility for decision-making is essential ... to the improvement of the management of human and financial resources" (A/55/270, para. 1) was used as a basis for the 1997 reform proposals — this is a quotation from the 2000 Secretary-General's report "Accountability and responsibility" (A/55/270). We believe that the reforms conducted in the United Nations should be consistent here too.

We welcome the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a carefully revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 to reflect new priorities of the Organization. It is important that its limited resources be apportioned in such a way as to make it possible to identify outdated and ineffective programmes and activities. In this regard, we look forward to specific proposals from the Secretary-General.

We would also like to note that the problem of shortcomings in the programming and budgeting process has been correctly identified in the report and, indeed, specific steps should be worked out to remove them. In this context, the Secretary-General proposes a number of drastic changes — more strategic budget with supplementary details provided separately; medium-term plans covering two rather than four years combined with the budget outline; and concentration of intergovernmental review of plans and budgets in the Fifth Committee. All of this need to be carefully studied, along with the proposal to give him authority to reallocate up to ten percent of budget resources.

In this connection, we believe it is important to submit additional and more detailed material on these issues to the Fifth Committee through the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).

We regret to note that the part of the report dedicated to personnel questions does not contain long-awaited proposals for radical reform of the United Nations contractual system and improvement of the performance evaluation system. We reaffirm that the key to effective reform of human resources management lies in complete abandonment of the system of permanent contracts and a switch to non-career service, which would make it possible to shift human resources flexibly and efficiently.

The ideas contained in the report of the Secretary-General on transforming human resources policy — for example, developing new approaches to staff recruitment and compensation in field locations and increasing departure packages and resources for staff retraining — should be viewed from the perspective of their additional financial implications. We cannot agree with the conclusion that the United Nations needs a more competitive system of pay and benefits. We regard the review of the system being conducted by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) as a purely creative quest for possibilities to enhance the efficiency of work of the Secretariat.

In order to enable Member States to take a decision on the proposed reform package, an effective working mechanism should be established, such as informal plenary consultations of the General Assembly conducted by its President. Within such a mechanism it would be possible to agree upon a draft resolution on the Secretary-General's reform proposals that would provide significant impetus to further reform of the Organization. Russia, for its part, is prepared to participate actively and constructively in such consultations.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): Permit me to begin by associating my delegation with the statements made on behalf of the African Group by the Permanent Representative of Egypt, in his capacity as its Chairman for the month of October, and by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report (A/57/387), entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change," containing 36 actions. We hope that the outcome of the consideration of these second-generation reform initiatives, at this high level, will help unleash a new burst of improvements to the management culture of the United Nations and enhance the effectiveness with which the Organization implements mandates. I also hope it will help free the Secretary-General from the tired notion that additional budgetary resources cannot be provided by Member States for the increasing mandates, as capacity exists for further efficiency gains.

In this regard, we note that while some of the actions are exploratory in nature and will require further study before consideration at a later stage, a number of them have immediate effect upon approval.

We also distinguish between proposals that lie well within the purview of the Secretary-General and those for which intergovernmental approval is required.

I intend during this intervention to speak to various actions that have been recommended by the Secretary-General. However, before doing that, let me indicate that my delegation has taken note of the Secretary-General's observations on the additional work required on issues such as the revitalization of the General Assembly, the enhancement of the Economic and Social Council and the process of Security Council reform. We recognize that those matters lie within our purview as Member States, and my delegation accordingly commits itself to work in concert with other delegations to that end also.

In respect of action 1, which is intended to bring the current programme budget in line with the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly, let me indicate that Ghana affirms its support for that proposed action. In our view, the intention is consistent with the results-based budgeting system, which is results-oriented and should reflect the priorities of the United Nations. My delegation further believes that since the medium-term plan, which forms a set of priority issues over the medium term, is not supposed to be static and is indeed subject to review every two years, the action being contemplated should be undertaken within the existing mechanism, and should be aimed at reflecting not only the priorities agreed to in the Millennium Declaration, but also the implementation mechanisms derived from follow-up meetings, such as the Monterrey Consensus, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Programme of Action of the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and others.

The proposals of the Secretary-General in actions 2 to 5, concerning measures to strengthen human rights, are laudable, and my delegation is in a position to endorse the proposals for implementation. It is our belief that universal principles of human rights require effective national action. Thus, countries that need assistance should be supported in developing national capacities on the standards and norms of internationally agreed human rights and fundamental freedoms. My delegation is, however, uncomfortable with the suggestion that human rights be integrated into the country programmes of the World Bank, as this could shift focus away from the core issue of development financing. In any event, such an action would require further study and assessment.

My delegation welcomes the intention of action 3 to streamline the reporting procedures under the treaty bodies on human rights. The dearth of reports submitted by Member States reflects the burden of reporting and undermines efforts towards the effective promotion of human rights. We look forward to the consultations that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would carry out with treaty bodies in that regard, and to his subsequent report.

Ghana has always viewed as important the role of the special procedures in the promotion and protection of international human rights. We therefore support efforts to enhance the effectiveness of that mechanism, in ways that would cause the current controversies about the outcome of the work of special procedures to abate, by avoiding actions that are perceived as arbitrary and by the formulation of uniform guidelines or rules of procedure.

In all this, and with an eye for the effective management of programme activities, we note that a reliable source of funding establishes a predictable basis for long-term planning. We therefore look forward to the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, which we hope will focus on ways of strengthening the fund-raising activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, freeing it of the restrictive conditionalities that some donors tie to funding activities, which, in some measure, has led to the fragmentation of programme activities.

The importance of the public information function of the work of the United Nations is better appreciated when one realizes that the United Nations has a relationship not merely with Governments of Member States, but with all the peoples of the world, most of whom look up to this Organization with great expectations. My delegation is therefore able to support the Secretary-General's intention to restructure the Department of Pubic Information in ways that can increase its effectiveness as the mouthpiece of the United Nations. We also support the evaluation activity to be carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services over a three-year period, as this can provide a scientific and objective basis for ascertaining the impact and cost-effectiveness of various United

Nations media outputs. We, however, urge that the impact analysis of the output of the Department of Public Information should cover all relevant concerns, including the needs of societies and peoples in all their wide diversity, and their capacities to access the media outputs.

Ghana supports the concept of regional hubs, starting with the consolidation of the 13 information centres in Western Europe, as it holds the potential to free resources from high-cost but low-impact areas for allocation to other strategic locations. We caution, however, that in Africa, for instance, the wide expanse of the region and the particular subregional concerns may require subregional hubs to be considered as an alternative option.

My delegation can also endorse implementation of action 9, aimed at improving the management of United Nations libraries, and stressing the need to adhere to the stated pledge that further movement towards the enhanced use of an electronic documentation and distribution system would not in any way constrain the access of less capable end users, including permanent missions, to hard-copy versions of documents and collections.

Regarding improvements to publications, however, my delegation is in a position to endorse implementation of action 10, except sub-action (d), which calls for the cessation of the publication by the United Nations of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. My delegation believes that the difficulties associated with clearing the backlog of volumes of the *Repertory* and the problems related to the internal capacity to publish should not excuse the existing obligation in that regard. Ghana commends the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs to establish a web site for an electronic version of the *Repertory*. We call for equal treatment of the *Repertory* and the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*, and we urge that exhaustive consideration be given to all options, including a previous proposal of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for a central *Repertory* section as well as the establishment and maintenance of a trust fund to provide dedicated resources that can fund posts on a long-term basis to facilitate the preparation of volumes for publication.

The Secretary-General's proposals relating to actions 11 to 13 are interesting but will require further consideration, as they have more direct impact on the negotiating capacity of Member States. Ghana could, however, endorse implementation of action 11, which aims to improve reporting, subject to the approval by the General Assembly, of clearly defined criteria to guide the process. It is our view that the drive for brevity should not obscure our clear need for information based on all the available and relevant facts concerning a particular matter. In addition, even as my delegation notes the challenges posed by action 12, we can commit to working with other delegations on the establishment of a mechanism to review the continuing need and the frequency of recurring reporting requirements.

With regard to action 13, Ghana can support the Secretary-General's intention to strengthen the capacity of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Management to deliver cost-effective meetings and conference services, through, inter alia, enhanced utilization of globally available United Nations resources. My delegation, however, notes the relationship between the proposals contained in the report under discussion and the additional measures of document A/57/289. It is not our expectation that approval granted with respect to the current action would necessarily extend to the measures contained in that document.

An indication of the effectiveness of the United Nations is, more often than not, reflected by the manner in which it is able to galvanize its rich reservoir of knowledge and skills and to bring them to bear on any given issue. Today, the range of issues of concern to Member States has increased, and their resolution is ever so critical to the well-being of so many. Ghana, therefore, supports further implementation of measures to strengthen the effectiveness of the presence of the United Nations in developing countries through enhanced coordination mechanisms, which must embrace country ownership and leadership. We also look forward to the document to be published in September 2003 clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation.

Actions 16 and 17, concerning the envisaged restructuring of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, are welcome, and we look forward to additional information on the value-added role anticipated by the proposed post of a third Assistant Secretary-General. Ghana endorses implementation of action 17 and advocates that the policy planning unit be an adjunct to the Office of the Under-Secretary-

General, which should lead policy development within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in a consistent and coherent manner.

The proposed restructuring of the Office of the Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa is significant, as it seeks to consolidate into a single high-profile office the currently scattered units dealing solely with issues related to Africa. We trust that such a restructuring, which would reflect the priority of Africa in the medium-term plan, would assume the required permanency in so far as Africa continues to be a priority consideration of the Assembly. In that respect, we envisage that the funding mechanism for that office may require an adjustment of its current allocation under special political missions. Furthermore, my delegation hopes that the wording of action 18, which defines the scope of the functions of the Office of the Adviser solely in terms of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, was merely inadvertent and not a deliberate decision to restrict its role to the General Assembly while excluding the Security Council. Other forums, such as the Economic and Social Council, exist and are important to the interests of Africa.

In the light of the important contributions that civil society groups and the private sector can make to the achievement of some of the core objectives of the United Nations, Ghana is in a position to endorse actions 19 and 20 for implementation, with the understanding that such implementation would proceed in conformity with existing legislative requirements and that substantive proposals to that end would bear in mind the international character of the United Nations and would be consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

With regard to actions 21 to 23, my delegation views as positive the commitment to review on a continuous basis the process for allocating resources. We are ready to consider each proposed action on its own merit. We believe it is necessary, however, to affirm our support for the medium-term plan as it currently exists and to express our doubts as to the usefulness of replacing it with a short-term plan, which the biennial budget represents. As the strategic document for envisioning the objectives of the Organization, we believe that the medium-term plan — which guides the focus of implementation of the prioritized objectives that are translated into biennial budgets — should be driven by all stakeholders, including the relevant substantive Main Committees and the Secretariat. Its development should originate from and be endorsed by the relevant M Committees.

My delegation can, however, support a bu outline that is prepared to reflect the four- medium-term plan, but only with the understan that, whereas the first two years would be firm outl and subject to approval by the General Assembly, remaining two years would serve only as indica outlines of future resource requirements. Ghana c also consider supporting a shorter, but adequate more strategic, budget if the supplementary detail be provided separately were easily accessible and not detract from our capacity to take well-infor decisions.

Regarding the strengthening of the systen evaluation and monitoring, my delegation sees tha an integral part of the results-based budgeting sy and understands that, in order to operate a flex system up front, accountability mechanisms w have to be strong downstream. We therefore forward to the proposals concerning evaluation monitoring, particularly an evaluation system in w financial performance and programme implementa would be reviewed in an integrated manner, to ga better appreciation of what results are being achi and at what cost, and to help answer questions suc whether a lack of funding accounts for the achievement of a set objective.

We look forward to further clarifications action 22, and we intend to discuss with delegations how the objective to consolidate within Fifth Committee all aspects of the budget deci making process will be pursued, if its merits wa that. We equally look forward to the new forma peacekeeping budgets that the Secretary-Ge intends to develop, consistent, we hope, with legislative requirement for a more results-orie budgeting format that better justifies the allocatio resources.

Ghana supports action 25, aimed at enhan staff mobility across the United Nations system. would, however, like to stress that mobility shoul promoted, not merely as a solution to sta constraints in some duty stations, but also, among things, as a means to developing the experi necessary to shape the views of senior professio We can also support action 26, which proposes li

the restrictions on the numbers of General Service staff eligible for promotion to the Professional category, with the understanding that the proposed increase of the annual quota of P-2 posts available for successful General Service examinations candidates would not in any way distort the prime consideration that the composition of the Professional grades of staff of the United Nations should reflect fairly the broad geographical distribution of Member States.

Ghana could be in a position to support action 27, concerning proposed changes to the functions and the career prospects of the General Service staff, and action 28, which would change the status of all employees of the United Nations Secretariat to international civil servants. However, we seek further clarification as to how they would affect the Fleming principle and its cost-saving elements.

My delegation is also in a position to support the flexible working arrangements proposed in action 29, insofar as it relates only to existing staff and does not become a consideration in the decision to employ new staff. The United Nations is a universal Organization and, as a result, nationals of all countries, developing and developed, should have equal opportunity to work for it.

Finally, my delegation is in a position to endorse actions 30 to 36, subject to a few clarifications which we will pursue during the informal consultations on the matter. Let me, however, indicate that we look forward to the active engagement of the Ombudsman in the resolution of disputes between management and staff. We hope that the Office will be given the necessary support to enable it fulfil its intended purpose.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my delegation's support for these actions submitted by the Secretary-General and to indicate our commitment to working with other delegations on them.

Mr. Takahashi (Japan): The advancement of globalization has resulted in unprecedented opportunities for exchanges and greater mutual understanding among people of different cultures. Indeed, globalization has brought benefits to many. At the same time, we recognize that there are many people who have not benefited from globalization and who are leading unfulfilling lives. Under these circumstances, there are many situations in which existing rules governing human activities that cross national borders are inadequate. The States Members of the United Nations must summon the wisdom to revitalize the functions of the Organization and ensure that it is able to respond to the challenges of the present era. The first step towards this goal is to ensure the accountability of the United Nations itself and to reform it by setting clear agendas. The Government of Japan expresses its appreciation to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his initiative in promoting United Nations reform.

Let me begin by offering Japan's views and expectations with respect to the Secretary-General's reform proposal.

First, if a General Assembly resolution is adopted at an early stage to provide guidance and momentum for reform as a whole, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General, Japan would support such a resolution. Secondly, Japan encourages the Secretary-General to expeditiously implement those elements of reform that are solely under his authority and in accordance with the relevant resolutions and decisions already adopted. Thirdly, once a reform is introduced, we, the Member States, should follow up the implementation process in an appropriate and timely manner and verify the results.

Now, I would like to convey Japan's views on several areas covered in the Secretary-General's report. The Government of Japan attaches particular importance to the following four points.

First, Japan considers that it is crucial for the United Nations to realign its programmes according to the new agenda defined through the Millennium Declaration and through major global conferences. This programme review should be reflected in the 2004-2005 regular budget of the United Nations. Clear priority-setting and the identification of offset savings should be undertaken in reviewing the budgeting and planning process for enhanced flexibility and effectiveness. The explanation of this point by Deputy Secretary-General Fréchette last week was encouraging.

We believe it is essential in this regard to allocate resources to high-priority activities by redeploying resources from low-priority and obsolete activities. The Government of Japan fully expects that the Secretary-General will identify and propose activities that could be discontinued or terminated. This would have further importance in light of the possible increase in the current budget. If these efforts do not succeed and, as a result, the size of the United Nations budget continues

to expand, Japan, which contributes one fifth of the regular budget, will be in a difficult position in terms of its accountability to its taxpayers.

Let me explain the budgetary process of the Japanese Government. In this process, the director of each section of Japan's ministries plays an important role in setting priorities and specifying activities to be scrapped due to budgetary constraints. Japanese taxpayers certainly expect a similar course to be followed in the budgetary process of the United Nations. We therefore support the initiative for sunset provisions proposed in the report of the Secretary-General.

Secondly, the Government of Japan wishes to underline the importance of improving the management of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and looks forward to a concrete and effective proposal from the High Commissioner to this end. The OHCHR should make every effort to promote collaboration with other United Nations organs, institutes and specialized agencies, while ensuring consistency in their respective mandates and upholding the fundamental concepts of human rights in the international community.

Thirdly, Japan attaches particular importance to the realization of the principle of equitable geographical distribution with regard to the Secretariat staff. In order to resolve the issue of non-representation or under-representation, Japan expects the Secretary-General to develop a programme and set specific targets for achieving equitable geographical distribution, as requested by resolution 55/258. The report of the Secretary-General on human resources management reform, in document A/57/293, does not fully address this request, and we look forward to a full report during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

With regard to the proposal for lifting the restrictions on the number of General Service staff eligible for promotion to the Professional category, Japan does not think that opportunities for such promotions should be ensured by increasing the ratio of recruitment from the General Service to the Professional category. Rather, Japan considers it appropriate to increase opportunities for recruitment to the Professional level through national competitive examinations and the General Service-to-Professional category examinations by changing the top-heavy post structure of the Secretariat to a structure that is m pyramid-shaped, as mentioned in resolution 51/241 reaffirmed in resolution 56/253.

Fourthly, from the viewpoint of increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations, Government of Japan expects further coordination the field among the United Nations system and ot players, and the streamlining of reports and confere management.

We welcome the Secretary-General's focus United Nations efforts in the field of development. Government of Japan hopes to deepen the discuss regarding the integrated and coordinated follow-up series of major international conferences in the fiel development, including the International Confere on Financing for Development and the World Sum on Sustainable Development, and on how to realize goals of such conferences. The Government of Ja expects that the deliberations which are taking pl under other agenda items will contribute to the ref of the United Nations as a whole.

Last but not least, I would like to comment on reform of the Security Council. The present report d not cover the necessary changes within internatio intergovernmental organs, such as the reform of Security Council, that a Working Group has b examining. This is, however, a very important tas strengthening the United Nations. As the Secret General noted in paragraph 20 of his report (docum A/57/387), "no reform of the United Nations would complete without reform of the Security Council".

It is both possible and necessary to enlarge Security Council without diminishing its effectiven Next year, the debate on Security Council reform enter its tenth year. The Government of Japan belie that, as the first practical step, we should now fo our discussion on such questions as the number of s on an enlarged Security Council. Japan intends to w hard in this regard.

We anticipate that the present report will prov further momentum to the discussions and we l forward to the Secretary-General's active engagem in this matter.

The Government of Japan is confident that efforts to reform the United Nations will result i more effective and efficient Organization. Japan

determined to work together with the United Nations and its Member States to realize this goal.

Mr. Yuchengco (Philippines): Today's environment tells us that many of the challenges we face as nations are actually collective concerns which require collective responses. We believe that the United Nations remains the most important international body for generating the necessary multilateral and collective action to address the myriad of international challenges before us. The strengthening of the United Nations is, therefore, an essential aspect of our work.

My delegation is pleased to address the General Assembly on this agenda item and to acknowledge the Secretary-General's initiatives in his unrelenting pursuit of an Organization that is united in purpose and exemplary in performance.

The quick tempo of world events requires the United Nations to maintain its step, to be quick in identifying problem areas and to institute improvements in its system of accomplishing its objectives. There is scope for simplifying procedures and processes, for developing a good pool of talented and trained personnel and for maximizing the benefits of information technology. In this regard, we have elected to keep an open mind and welcome many of the actions proposed by the Secretary-General in his report entitled, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (document A/57/387).

In particular, we welcome the measures proposed by the Secretary-General to improve coordination in the United Nations system so as to minimize or eliminate duplication, be they in activities, reports or publications. Better coordination should redound not only to the streamlining of the work of the Secretariat and of the intergovernmental bodies, but more importantly, to the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. We also recognize that better coordination will improve policy development and planning.

My delegation concurs with the Secretary-General that there is scope for coordinating and rationalizing work programmes and reports. We have taken note of the Secretary-General's proposal to achieve this and would be interested to see how related subjects could be consolidated.

Likewise, there is scope for simplifying processes, and we look forward to reviewing a programme budget that will better reflect the priorities of the United Nations in a streamlined format that is accessible to readers other than experts. We expect that the new format will allow for a less tedious deliberation of the budget and yet allow for a more substantive debate on its programmatic content.

My delegation believes that the Organization must have the human resource capacity to implement the proposed changes. There is a constant need for upgrading this capacity by providing appropriate incentives and opportunities to enable the Organization to maintain the best pool of talent and to take the necessary measures to continue the upgrading of skills.

My delegation also appreciates the need for effective communication of the United Nations message to sustain the support of the international community for the noble work of our Organization. While millions of people in the world may know of the existence of the United Nations, few have a full awareness of the critical role it plays in our lives and the activities it undertakes to promote development and maintain international peace and security. There is a need to support its work by getting the correct message out through appropriate publications and communications.

Reform may have different connotations. My delegation would like to see it as a continuing improvement of a system, rather than just change for the sake of change or as a cost-cutting measure. At the same time, providing clear goals and processes is necessary in order to eliminate any anxieties we may have in instituting new approaches. We have followed the reform process throughout the past decade and believe that transparency, accountability and universal participation have proven to be the best way of achieving concrete results and ensuring support for reform. We are, therefore, pleased that the consideration of the Secretary-General's report will be undertaken through a more informal and open-ended process of dialogue and exchange of views.

My delegation supports the Secretary-General's efforts at reform and will participate constructively in the work ahead. In this regard, there are some preliminary views we wish to express. First of all, the decision-making process on the Secretary-General's agenda for further change should be open and transparent so as to ensure the widest possible participation.

Secondly, through a process of open dialogue, delegations should be able to distinguish between the actions that are within the Secretary-General's mandate and thus ready for immediate implementation, and the actions requiring endorsement or action by the General Assembly.

Thirdly, we should try to conclude our work on this item as expeditiously as possible, but we must also bear in mind that reform is an ongoing process; some actions may need time to develop or study. Hasty decisions must be avoided.

And finally, although my delegation is open to the content of any resolution on this item, we believe that it should aim more at providing broad and strategic direction for further work on certain actions at a more detailed level, rather than aim at specificity at this time, although specifics may be necessary in some cases. Such an outcome would be in line with our view that United Nations reform is an ongoing process.

Two years ago during the Millennium Summit, our leaders gathered in this Assembly to reaffirm their faith in the ability of the Organization and its Charter to create a prosperous, peaceful and just world. The principal organs of the United Nations each have important roles to play in this regard. This is especially true of the only universal organ, the General Assembly. It is therefore essential that we seek to revitalize the General Assembly so that it can reaffirm its central position as the chief policy-making organ of the United Nations.

My delegation further believes that the General Assembly remains the only principal United Nations organ in which the principle of sovereign equality among States is respected and observed. It is the only principal organ in which all Member States participate equally and democratically in the decision-making process. Moreover, the General Assembly's mandate covers all aspects of multilateral cooperation, especially promoting and sustaining economic growth and development and maintaining international peace and security. It must therefore continuously be in a position to assert these roles.

It is timely and appropriate that the issue of the revitalization of the General Assembly be placed once again on the United Nations agenda of priorities. It is also linked in many ways to the proposed agenda for further change of the Secretary-General.

While a number of United Nations reform and strengthening exercises have been undertaken and concluded over the past 10 years, the work of the General Assembly needs to be further enhanced, both internally and in terms of more meaningful interaction with the other United Nations organs, in particular the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. The Philippines remains committed to pursuing the many agreed but yet to be implemented measures towards achieving this goal. In particular, we would like to see implementation of the salient features of resolutions 51/241 and 55/285, especially paragraph 14 of 55/285, which mandates further action to be taken on the basis of the debate on the report on the work of the Organization; and paragraphs 18 and 19 of resolution 55/285, which deal, respectively, with the preparation of reports and scheduling of meetings and with the greater use by the President of facilitators, where appropriate.

It is also important to consider ways and means of implementing paragraph 12 of resolution 51/241, which mandates informal consultations under the President or one of the Vice-Presidents to discuss the content of any action by the Assembly based on the debate on the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. Revitalizing and improving the efficiency of the General Assembly should therefore be based on or take off from previously agreed resolutions on revitalization in order to determine whether they are being implemented or to consider the extent to which they have been implemented with a view to possible further action. New and innovative measures should also be considered. We also view the non-paper of the President of the General Assembly at the fifty-sixth session, dated 6 June 2002, as an additional input into the exercise on revitalizing and strengthening the United Nations at this session.

Revitalizing the General Assembly, as envisioned by the founding fathers of the United Nations and as resonated by our leaders during the Millennium Summit two years ago, would reaffirm our faith in the Organization and our commitment to promoting democracy among nations and international cooperation as the main vehicle for addressing the global challenges of our time.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): Over the past decades, the United Nations international and global agendas have expanded many-fold. The great conferences of the 1990s added to this unprecedented

scale and dimension. The United Nations needed to be restructured, revitalized and retooled to discharge its burgeoning responsibilities. It was therefore apt for the Secretary-General to respond to these needs by presenting his reform proposals. Through this, he has demonstrated wisdom, vision and commitment. He has also thereby vindicated the confidence reposed by us in him. We thank him for the initiative and also for his succinct presentation of his report this morning.

We see these proposals as part of the process initiated in 1997. An immediate concern was the establishment of managerial efficiency. It is hence natural that we focus attention on rationalization of structures, optimal utilization of resources, elimination of duplication, reinforcement of coordination and introduction of benchmarks for performance evaluation, but there are other concerns as well. We believe that the changes should bring forth improvement in the Organization's capacity to deliver more effectively. They should also enhance the ability of the United Nations to reflect the aspirations of nations and peoples. This should, as the Secretary-General has said, be a process, rather than a one-off event.

The statement made by the representative of Venezuela, as Chair of the Group of 77, reflected our broad views on and expectations of the report. May I now take this opportunity to make a few additional comments on the report.

Human rights is one area where Bangladesh sees merit in the proposed measures, particularly when they relate to supporting countries in building strong human rights institutions and to reviewing the special procedures and those of the treaty bodies. While the United Nations High Commissioner prepares his report next year, we would expect that the Member States will be appropriately consulted.

We support the Secretary-General's proposals to have closer collaboration with civil society. The proposed creation of a panel of eminent persons is commendable. We welcome the measures proposed in the area of public information and documentation. In our view, these aim at creating a culture of communications in the Organization. We recognize the need for focused, well-clarified reporting. We are ready to work on the improvements in this area involving new techniques and technologies. One cannot turn away from so many improved tools and methods available to us, which are far more numerous than they were even a decade back.

At the same time, we also need to recognize that an intergovernmental organization such as the United Nations has Member States with diverse requirements. It is therefore necessary to factor in the diverse requirements of the Members the Organization serves. We endorse the proposals to have focused reports. Indeed, that is needed for the reports to be more imaginative and analytical in addressing issues. This is particularly true for reports in the areas of social development and economic development, which cross-cut each other. But proposed consolidated reports might involve questions related to timing and sequencing with the work of various Committees and bodies. We would appreciate a further elaboration on this aspect. Economic and social development is one area to which my delegation obviously attaches great importance. We welcome the proposal for greater coherence aimed at better service delivery in that broad sector. The proposed modalities, such as joint programming and resource-pooling, are noteworthy. We expect such improvements to better support development and humanitarian programmes, particularly at the country level. I would, in this connection, draw attention to the Brussels Programme of Action adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). That Programme of Action is quite elaborate and clearly delineates actions to be taken by the LDCs and the international community. We are at the initial stage of its implementation and hope the proposed measures will also contribute to the efforts undertaken within the parameters of the Brussels Programme of Action.

A detailed report on technical cooperation is due next year. Still, while outlining the broad principles for defining roles and responsibilities among United Nations entities, the current report mentions that "... technical cooperation should be delivered ... by the entities that have an established field presence and experience". (A/57/387, para. 124 (d))

At this stage, let me underline that there are a number of funds and programmes, for instance UNCTAD, that lack a field presence. We greatly benefit from their activities and value their work. That is why, I would stress, in any re-orientation of support to Member States, the programmatic impact on most developing countries should be appropriately weighed.

I would also stress that, on many occasions, it is difficult to measure the stage of accomplishment reached by a programme activity. This is particularly so in the social and economic areas. This must be considered when deciding on programme closures.

In this Organization, the role of the planning and budgetary process cannot be over emphasized.

Currently, the four-year medium-term plan serves as the principal policy directive for the United Nations. After meticulous examination by the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), the plan is adopted and reviewed by the General Assembly. In doing so, all relevant mandates are taken into account. For example, just this summer, as CPC reviewed the current plan, it incorporated the relevant Millennium Development Goals. We are ready to see how CPC's working methods could be further improved.

Related to CPC is the issue of the medium-term plan and its priorities. If the Millennium Development Goals are to be the central set of goals, some elaboration will be needed as to how to reconcile them with the medium-term plan priorities.

There are thousands of unseen hands that provide the backup support to our work. Their welfare is of critical concern to us. The Secretary-General's report has proposed a number of measures to create a more versatile, competent and well-managed workforce. This is welcome.

The Secretary-General has requested clear guidance in the form of a resolution by this Assembly. We owe him this. President Kavan has elaborated a procedure whereby he aims to achieve this objective, through transparent consultations and the help of a few facilitators under his stewardship. We endorse that approach. We commend his commitment. We have every confidence that our combined endeavours will bring this task to fruition.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/57/PV.40

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

40th plenary meeting
Thursday, 31 October 2002, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kavan ..... (Czech Republic)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 52 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387 and Corr.1)

Mr. Nikolov (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I am making this statement on behalf of my Permanent Representative, who is unable to present at this morning's meeting.

In the Millennium Declaration, the United Nations provided the world with a vision for the new century. That vision was linked to measurable targets that included precise and time-bound goals. In addition, the Secretary-General produced a road map (A/56/326) of the steps needed to reach the Millennium Development Goals.

Together with the definition of new development goals, the reform of peace operations, the enhancing of coherence and the building of new partnerships, the road map is among the new features of the United Nations, an Organization willing and able to deal with the requirements and the challenges of the new millennium.

However, strengthening the United Nations cannot be completely achieved without two basic preconditions: creating an agenda focused on the essential issues of the globe and reforming the main United Nations bodies. We have succeeded in creating an appropriate agenda. The programme of work of the Organization, as envisaged in the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly (A/57/387), including strengthening human rights and enhancing public information, deserves our full support.

The United Nations has also made remarkable achievements in strengthening its capacity to fight terrorism and in two crucial areas — financing for development and sustainable development. On the other hand, if our agenda has an Achilles heel, then it must be identified, along with the shortcomings of and delays in reforming the main United Nations bodies.

By placing this issue as a very high priority on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, Mr. President, you have not only met our expectations, but have also provided an opportunity to regain momentum in reforming both the General Assembly and the Security Council. In order for this process to be successful, full compliance by Member States is necessary, as is the work of the Open-ended Working Group on the reform of the Security Council and the work of the facilitators for the open-ended consultations on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

It is imperative to recognize during deliberations on strengthening the United Nations that this issue transcends the national interests of each individual Member State. If we want the United Nations to be a more meaningful, powerful and effective organization in the era of globalization, it must not be reduced to a

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mere sum of national interests. That should be taken as the point of departure of our intention to reform the United Nations system. We should be guided by the fact that a complete reform of the United Nations cannot be accomplished without the simultaneous enlargement of the Security Council, revitalization of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and strengthening of the management and administration of the United Nations.

Regarding the overall goal, we should seek full emancipation of the United Nations as a multilateral institution, with a General Assembly that is not only revitalized, but also capable of utilizing its full capacity; with a Security Council that is truly representative of the United Nations membership; and with a streamlined Secretariat that is responsive to the needs and interests of all Member States.

In short, what Raymond Aaron has defined as the germ of a universal consciousness should become the main ingredient in deepening the reform process of the United Nations.

According to the Charter, the organizational architecture of the United Nations is based on three pillars — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Secretariat — whose equal importance must be emphasized. Contrary to that, however, the General Assembly is increasingly viewed as the weakest pillar of the three. Its main problem seems to stem from what might be defined as inertia that cannot be ended, despite the fact that, since the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, many resolutions on revitalization have been adopted.

The signal is more than clear. In order to revitalize the General Assembly, we must find ways and means of reshaping and restructuring its agenda, working methods and procedural matters. The General Assembly must not exercise its function as a seasonal body. The General Assembly, together with its working bodies, such as the presidency, the Bureau and others, has to play an active role in designing, disseminating and implementing United Nations policies on the global issues which should be at the core of its activities. The recent measures aimed at improving some of the Assembly's working methods should be considered as a first step in the right direction.

In the Millennium Declaration Member States have already made a strong commitment to reform the United Nations system, reaffirming the central position of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations. One can hardly imagine how that role can be safeguarded without far-reaching reform of the General Assembly.

Undoubtedly, the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly is a key issue of the ongoing reform debate. Close cooperation and coordination between the two bodies appears necessary, particularly in discussing issues of vital importance to the Organization as a whole. If we agree with the assessment made by our colleague Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore, that an essential symbiotic relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly exists, then we must accept the need to restructure the General Assembly, rather than revitalizing it. That is the only way to preserve the balance between a reformed Security Council and the General Assembly.

During the recent debate on the report of the Security Council, several delegations made a clear commitment to ensuring that reform is comprehensive, and that it includes expansion of Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories and improvement of the Council's working methods and decision-making process, and that it imparts balance, accurate representation and legitimacy to the Council, thus reflecting contemporary reality.

At the same time, we agree with warnings against makeshift solutions, such as the one made by Ambassador Schumacher of Germany. In our opinion, the most effective way to avoid them is through a phased reform process. We should not forget that we are ultimately responsible for the pace and scope of the reform process.

It is for Member States to decide the dosage of political will required to reach a successful outcome in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform. On the other hand, we must be aware of the fact that the authority of the Organization as a whole, and the credibility and legitimacy of the Security Council are at stake. To promote global governance, as one of our colleagues, Ambassador Vento of Italy, rightly pointed out in the aforementioned debate, the Security Council needs true leadership based on a collective vision and shared interests and values.

Many people, among them the people of the Republic of Macedonia, share a vision of a world that must move from interdependence to being an integrated global community with a shared future, shared responsibilities, shared prosperity and, above all, shared values. Can we imagine such a paradigm of progress without an organization like the United Nations? I cannot. But nor can it be imagined that the United Nations can serve those purposes without profound reform of its main bodies fully corresponding to such a vision.

Quite often, during our discussions on strengthening the United Nations, reference is made to the utmost necessity for the Organization to be both effective and efficient. Within that context, allow me to quote a former colleague, Ambassador Perkins: "Being effective means doing the right thing. Being efficient means doing the thing right". Let those words of wisdom guide us while we carry forward the noble endeavour of the work of the reform of the United Nations.

Mr. Stańczyk (Poland): I would like to voice my country's appreciation for the Secretary-General's efforts in the further expansion of the scope of reforms and modernization of the United Nations. The reform measures presented in the Secretary-General's report (S/2002/387) are a necessary and valuable contribution to the implementation of the noble objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

The reform and adaptation of the United Nations to meet present requirements and needs can and should be pursued at different levels. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, Mr. Wladzimierz Cimoszewicz, during the general debate at this very session called for the elaboration of a document that could be considered as a new act of the United Nations at the dawn of the twenty-first century, which could give fresh impetus to the principles, organs and mechanisms of the United Nations and make them more responsive to the challenges dominating the life of the international community today (*see A/57/PV.8, p. 20*).

Four groups of fundamental problems have been identified, and an appropriate mechanism, initially in the form of a group of eminent persons, has been suggested. We want to consult on these ideas with the United Nations membership at large. We duly note that the reform proposals put forward by the Secretary-General focus on a cluster of managerial and efficiency measures, within his own area of responsibility and competence, aimed at ensuring better service for Member States. Consequently, the key political domain of United Nations reform falls within the purview of Member States and, as such, requires their concerted efforts.

Mr. President, let me express our thanks for your timely initiative of convening the informal consultations held on 24 October which, before the present debate, allowed for an exchange of views and a dialogue on the reform proposals between Member States and the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Louise Fréchette.

Poland is following this debate with the utmost interest and shares a great number of the opinions expressed during its course. In particular, we align ourselves with the statement of Ambassador Løj of Denmark, who spoke on behalf of the European Union and associated countries.

At this stage of the debate, I would like to share with other Member States some general observations and a few comments on issues presented in the document A/57/387 that are perceived by my Government to be the important ones. We begin with the Secretary-General's oft-repeated premise that United Nations reform is not an event but a process. We hope that this new initiative will add momentum to United Nations reform, building on the achievements and lessons learned so far, and that it will focus on well-defined objectives and achievable and measurable expected accomplishments.

To attain this, it is necessary to promote and strengthen mutual trust, cooperation and consultations between Member States and the Secretariat. This is a *conditio sine qua non* since reform and its success are a responsibility shared by both Member States and the Secretariat.

In the view of my delegation, the strength of the report on reform lies in its focus on a select group of issues and in its avoidance of the natural temptation to cover everything, spreading the reform exercise over too many issues at one time. The reform document sets out the goals and objectives to be achieved. We welcome proposal of specific dates in a number of actions as a right step towards raising the level of specificity of the reform process.

Our analysis of the document on an agenda for further change leads us to conclude that it fairly reflects the current state of affairs and provides a convincing diagnosis of existing shortcomings. Up to this point, most if not all Member States and the Secretariat can agree. When it comes to the proposed actions aimed at the implementation of those objectives, Poland, while wholeheartedly supporting most of them, would like to suggest their eventual expansion. In some other cases, we would like to seek further clarifications to dispel our doubts.

We agree with the thrust of action 1, in which the Secretary-General announces that his next proposed programme budget, for 2004-2005, will better reflect the priorities agreed at the Millennium Assembly. At this stage, this is a declaration of intent which corresponds to and is linked with a number of other actions for the streamlining of the planning and budgeting process, improvements required by results-based budgeting and the expansion of the very concept of peacekeeping operations. This set of actions, which, taken together, reflect the concept of results-based management, obviously requires a closer, technical review at the expert level.

The Secretary-General also proposes to renew his earlier concept of sunset provisions, which in previous years was met with reservations. At this juncture, we would like to indicate that it could be useful to review also how new emerging needs and new additional programmes and activities could best be accommodated through streamlined planning and budgetary processes. One way to handle this issue is to identify existing projects and activities which are not of immediate importance, whose impact is less crucial and which could be postponed or implemented by other international organizations, scientific and training institutions or civil society. Now more than in the past, the results-based technique, which focuses on impact and attaining measurable achievements, allows the identification of those activities. Resources thus freed up could then be redirected to new high-priority areas. The General Assembly might revisit a number of its past consensus resolutions, calling for the identification of obsolete, marginally useful or ineffective activities. The title of these resolutions was not very diplomatic. It sounded somehow negative, or even offensive, and it could be changed. But the idea behind that process is sound and could be better applied to present-day requirements.

As an example of the actions that enjoy our full support, let me cite action 5, aimed at strengthening the management capacity of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. This is an area of United Nations activities in which my country has accumulated some experience over recent years, most recently from the perspective of the chairmanship of the Commission on Human Rights. We are looking forward to the conclusions and specific action-oriented recommendations of the management review requested by the General Assembly, which is being completed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

Representative of the group of measures on which Poland has some doubts and reservations is action 8, which contemplates consolidation of United Nations information centres into regional hubs, starting with Western Europe. The argument in favour of that measure, which means the closure of some information centres, is rationalization and cost-cutting. Poland's experience with United Nations information centres demonstrates that they are a powerful tool at the Organization's disposal and that they play a key role in the function of outreach, liaison with civil society and advocacy of United Nations activities for the general public. Those objectives are a vital part of the new structure of the Department of Public Information, which is outlined in action 6. Hasty decisions to close well-functioning centres in the name of rationalization and expected savings — which first have to be identified as meaningful — could bring more harm than good. Accordingly, we would like to suggest a cautious approach. If the Secretary-General decides to go ahead with his intention to create a Western European hub, we recommend that it be a limited pilot project only. In due time, the results and impact of that project should be properly evaluated and communicated to Member States before further action is taken on the matter.

The exhaustive debate of yesterday and today brings us closer to an understanding and appreciation of the stage of reform now before us. A number of proposed actions are of a highly technical nature and require more detailed debate among experts. Issues such as reforming the planning and budgeting processes, human resources management and conference management would best be discussed in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly. Similarly,

other issues could usefully be reviewed by the other Main Committees of the General Assembly.

If past practice is a guide, the General Assembly might at a certain moment decide on the need to create a dedicated mechanism — a working group to develop further and agree on the details of reform measures. My delegation declares its readiness to participate in such endeavours to the best of our abilities.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Please allow me, first of all, to express our sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the report he has prepared. Our delegation notes the Secretary-General's intention to further improve the Organization and to adapt it to modern requirements of Member States and to new challenges of our era. Comprehensive reform of the United Nations remains one of the components of the process of the development of the United Nations system. The Organization will not be able to move ahead in solving the most acute problems of this century without having a common recognition of the rules and structures whose activities should become more consistent, predictable and, above all, efficient.

The main task today is to determine the most important areas where the work of the United Nations can be improved in order to strengthen as much as possible the Organization's potential for implementing the guidelines contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as in the final documents of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The recent adoption of these programme documents mentioned above has undoubtedly predetermined the need for a careful analysis and evaluation of all the Organization's activities, including the redistribution of financial resources.

In this connection, we are looking forward to the submission next year by the Secretary-General for the consideration of the General Assembly of a revised draft program budget for the biennium 2004-2005, to permit this document to reflect the priorities stipulated by the above mentioned international conferences. On the basis of a revised draft programme budget and by implementing the Millennium Declaration, along with the decisions adopted at Monterrey and Johannesburg, we hope to further the principles of integrity and universality.

The delegation of Belarus believes that equal attention should be given to all the goals formulated in the Millennium Declaration, many of which have been further specified in the decisions adopted in Monterrey and Johannesburg.

The above-mentioned goals, as is known, cover a wide range of tasks in such areas as overcoming social and economic backwardness and the eradication of the poverty, the protection and encouragement of all human rights, including the right to development, measures in the area of international security and disarmament, and environmental protection.

We note with interest the intention of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to develop and implement, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, a plan to strengthen human rights-related United Nations actions at the country level.

We expect that the General Assembly will show great interest and give comprehensive consideration to this important document.

We also hope that subsequent measures to strengthen the United Nations system will be adopted, taking into account the interests of all States at differing stages of social and economic development. The United Nations needs to facilitate the establishment of stable and irreversible trends in the social and economic development of all States, including through their effective integration into the world economy. Otherwise, we will continue to face situations where, for example, because of large-scale financial crises, dynamically developing economies of individual States are relegated to the status of recipients of international assistance for development.

The Republic of Belarus supports the proposals by the Secretary-General with regard to further improving United Nations activities in the field of public information. We anticipate that, as a result of the proposed restructuring, the personnel of the Department of Public Information (DPI) will be able to improve the scope of information products that are prepared, taking into account the specificity of different regions and the need to provide information regarding United Nations activities that is of direct interest to a particular public. The experience of Belarus' cooperation with the United Nations Radio in the dissemination of information for the attention of

the Belarus public indicates that materials prepared with due account taken of the domestic interests are the most effective ones.

We are confident that in the preparation of the Programme Budget for the biennium 2004-2005 we should envisage the allocation of sufficient resources to ensure the use of advanced information technologies in DPI activities and work to provide information services to Member States.

The need for structural reforms within the United Nations should not overshadow measures intended to rationalize the organizational aspects of the United Nations activities. In this regard, the proposed measures for further improvement and rationalization of the preparation and submission of reports deserve special attention.

We generally share the approach to reduce the number of reports and improve their quality. Belarus supports the aspiration of the Secretary-General to make reports more analytical, informative and more focused on proposed and recommended measures. At the same time, we consider it important in preparing the reports to adhere to the principle of considering every situation on a case-by-case basis, with due account of the opinion of countries in whose interest the report has been requested.

United Nations reform is unattainable without changing the system of planning and the preparation of budgets, which requires serious analysis and review in order to reallocate the resources in accordance with the approved priorities of the Organization.

We cannot help expressing our satisfaction that in recent years there has been some improvement in the United Nations financial situation. At the same time, we should not forget that this is occurring against the background of an ever-increasing scope of United Nations activities dictated by globalization and the new challenges of the present day.

We cannot agree with what we see as a somewhat oversimplified approach contained in the report as to the consideration of the most complex issues of the budgeting and planning processes.

Belarus can agree with the proposal to transform a mid-term plan into a plan covering only two years, including measures for simplifying its preparation. However, we are doubtful as to the need to authorize the Secretary-General to reallocate resources between programmes and budget items up 10 per cent wit single budgetary period. I would like to recall tha distribution and reallocation of resources bet programmes is an extremely sensitive issue reflect balance of interests of major groups of countries.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm readiness of the Belarus delegation for constru cooperation in the consideration of the prop presented by the Secretary-General, on the basis o common interest, confirmed in the Millen Declaration, to reform the United Nations with a to transforming it into a truly universal institutionally strong organization capable addressing the complex issues dictated by our time

Mr. Jalango (Kenya): At the outset, let convey my delegation's appreciation for the mann which the Assembly President is steering deliberations on this important subject. My deleg welcomes the report of the Secretary-General ent "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agend further change". The report is timely, comprehe and provides useful guidelines for spearheading reforms that would ensure the strengthening o Organization. We appreciate the fact that the Secre General incorporated into his report areas that va delegations had identified as priorities and in ne further clarification.

My delegation associates itself fully with statement made earlier by Egypt on behalf o African Group, as well as with the non-paper tha been circulated outlining the concerns of Af States. My delegation also associates itself with statement made earlier by Venezuela on behalf o Group of 77 and China.

We acknowledge that the priorities for the century, as outlined in the report, are those iden by the Millennium Declaration (A/RES/55/2), na the fight for development for all the peoples o world; the fight against poverty, ignorance and dis the fight against injustice; the fight against viol terror and crime; and the fight against the degrad and destruction of our common home. My delegati of the opinion, however, that, in order for t priorities to be truly comprehensive, they sh complement the outcomes of other conferences, su the International Conference on Financing Development and the World Summit on Sustai Development.

It is the conviction of my delegation that the political and socio-economic scenario prevailing in the world today, in this era of globalization, needs a strong and effective multilateral institution. We therefore add our voice to those who have called for the need to reaffirm and strengthen the core responsibility of the United Nations capability for collective action. Indeed, that is the guiding principle that led our leaders to adopt the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), as well as to transform the Organization of African Unity into the African Union. We realized that our economies and political structures cannot compete individually in the international arena.

We note with concern the continued inadequate funding from the United Nations regular budget for both the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). In that regard, Kenya calls for the strengthening of UNEP and UN-Habitat through the provision of adequate and predictable funding to enable them carry out their mandates in an effective and timely manner.

My delegation calls for further measures aimed at strengthening coordination between Headquarters and regional offices. That, we believe, will eliminate overlapping and duplication of efforts and will ensure cost-effectiveness. We support the proposal of the United Nations Development Group to develop an implementation plan to strengthen the United Nations presence in developing countries. However, in order for that to be effective, it must be accompanied by the provision of adequate resources in terms of both personnel and financing at all levels.

My delegation wishes to seek further clarification on the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, especially its role with regard to the follow-up of NEPAD. Kenya fully supports the view of the African Group that such an Office should be permanent within the United Nations system in order to address African interests on a continuous and permanent basis.

With regard to General Assembly reforms, Kenya fully endorses the achievements attained thus far and welcomes the amendment of rule 30 of the rules of procedure, which has resulted in a smooth transition from the fifty-sixth to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly following the early election of the President and the Vice-Presidents. We call for that move to be institutionalized.

Kenya believes that the General Assembly should assume its role as the principal organ of the United Nations and calls for the streamlining of work and the interaction between the General Assembly and other organs, principally the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. My delegation fully supports the proposal that items and resolutions should be reviewed with a view to reducing their number. We welcome the proposal for the biennialization of items and for the clustering of items dealing with common issues as a means of ensuring economy of time and expenses. We urge that caution be exercised so as to ensure that significant issues — particularly those pertaining to developing countries — are not denied the adequate attention that they deserve.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative, outlined in his report, with regard to supporting human rights at the country level by rationalizing and streamlining the work of the human rights treaty bodies, improving working methods and procedures and streamlining management. That will assist in the improvement of the financial situation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. But Kenya would like to see elections to the membership of the Commission on Human Rights conducted, consistent with established practice, on a regional basis. My delegation notes the Secretary-General's ideas contained in paragraph 46 of the report and seeks further clarification, since we are of the view that the holding of common positions is a normal practice within the Commission on Human Rights.

Kenya reiterates its belief that Member States should be consulted with regard to any plans aimed at expanding the mandates of the Resident Representatives and that all operational activities of the United Nations should conform to the principles of neutrality and multilateralism. In addition, it is Kenya's resolute conviction that States parties to various conventions should be consulted on measures taken to streamline reporting procedures and obligations. Although there is merit in single reporting, the practicability of that proposal should be elaborated further in consultation with Member States, taking into account the mandates establishing the special procedures.

My delegation welcomes the important role played by the United Nations in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. As the Assembly is aware, the

African continent has been critically affected by that pandemic, which has reversed our development gains of the past three decades and has increased poverty levels. Kenya has established a National AIDS Control Council, and we are gratified to note that levels of prevalence have shown a marked decrease since the inception of advocacy programmes. We are confident that the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria will contribute immensely to our endeavours to eradicate this scourge.

As a country that is actively involved in and committed to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Kenya welcomes the implementation of the proposals contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305), especially with regard to the significant improvements made in the Organization's capacity to deploy and manage complex peacekeeping and peace-building operations.

My delegation supports the efforts aimed at improving United Nations public information activities and at enhancing the effectiveness of the Department of Public Information (DPI). In that regard, we welcome the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report with regard to the restructuring of DPI, particularly the possibility of establishing regional information links.

Kenya supports the efforts of the Secretary-General aimed at improving the Organization's effectiveness as well as at streamlining the budgetary and administrative procedures of the United Nations. It is in that positive spirit of support that my delegation wishes to submit its comments and views on the report as follows.

With regard to the intention of the Secretary-General to submit a thoroughly revised programme budget to the General Assembly in 2003, my delegation underscores the need to ensure that the revised programme budget reflects the priorities contained in the medium-term plan and other legislative mandates.

Kenya welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals on managing conferences and meetings. In that regard, I have asked the Secretary-General to ensure that there is enhanced and sustained utilization of conference facilities and services in other United Nations duty stations, particularly at the United Nations Office at Nairobi. My delegation appreciates the measures undertaken by the Secretary-General to improve and strengthen the capacity and utilization conference facilities and services at Nairobi, whi have, so far, yielded positive results.

This confirms the viability of the United Natio Office at Nairobi as an important venue and a glob centre for international conferences and programm for the United Nations, as well as for oth governmental bodies. My delegation therefore ca upon the Secretary-General to take pragmatic steps expand and modernize the United Nations conferen facilities at that duty station in view of the challeng to further growth in utilization posed by the inadequa of necessary resources and capacity requirements.

We also welcome the Secretary-Genera proposals on enhancing staff mobility across the Unit Nations system. In that regard, we wish to draw attention of the Secretary-General to the fact that Arabic and English interpretation booths ha remained vacant ever since a permanent Interpretati Service was established at the United Nations Office Nairobi in 2000.

Kenya fully supports the Secretary-Genera intention to review the current system of inter justice, to improve the efficiency of the system and allow staff to have fair and just processing of th complaints. We call upon the newly appoint Ombudsman to resolve some long- pending cases injustice done to employees or former employees of United Nations from developing countries, includi some of my nationals. We note with concern, howev that some of these cases have been outstanding close to more than 10 years.

Let me conclude by reaffirming my delegatio commitment to United Nations reform and to subsequent strengthening of the Organization. We ho that the issues we have raised so far for furt clarification will be given due consideration.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At outset, I would like to extend our sincere thanks Secretary-General Kofi Annan for introducing important report (A/57/387). We commend him for initiatives to reform the work of the Organization various spheres, in order to improve its efficiency to make it a capable Organization, responsive to numerous challenges confronting the world today.

My delegation also supports the statement m by Ambassador Ahmed Aboul Gheit, the Perman

Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United Nations, on behalf of the African Group under agenda item 53, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations system".

When considering the reform process, one must acknowledge that reform efforts, by their very nature, require perseverance and careful insight. It is a long, multi-phase process in which one cannot skip one phase and move to the next. The path to reform consists of a series of harmonious, consecutive and regular steps towards the desired objectives.

My delegation, in principle, affirms its support for all reform efforts. We look forward to a comprehensive approach to reform that would make it possible to achieve reform of the major organs of the United Nations system, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and others. Such an approach must also reflect the close links among those organs.

The report before us, entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", has given rise to numerous questions, ideas and concepts; it has energized groups and enriched our debate. It has thus laid down a good foundation on which we can build until we complete the structure we seek.

The legitimate question of the priorities governing the work, activities and programmes of the Organization is among those that need definite and categorical answers. At the Millennium Summit, heads of State or Government set the strategic priorities that govern our direction and light the way to the future of humankind. Does the report of the Secretary-General in its present form define new priorities, other than those that were agreed upon? And what has become of the other priorities that have not been included in the Secretary-General's report?

My delegation believes that the report fails to mention many important topics that we had hoped would be discussed, in view of their obvious importance, such as those relating to the Security Council and legal questions.

We highly appreciate the fact that the Secretary-General has accorded special importance to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration by mentioning it in action 1. It is important to recall the results of the major conferences that have been convened by the United Nations system over the past two years. Among these conferences, we cite the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, among others, which have added new commitments and specific objectives to the Millennium Declaration. These must all be taken into consideration when debating this question. My country appreciates the contribution made by the United Nations and its agencies towards achieving sustainable development in developing countries. This prompts us to welcome the view reflected in the Secretary-General's action 14, regarding strengthening the work of the United Nations at the country level. In order to ensure the Organization's success in discharging its mandate, it must address the shortage of human resources in its country offices and mobilize the capacities of those offices so that they can carry out their responsibilities.

We need hardly recall the negative effect of the decrease in basic resources on operational activities and, hence, on the development programmes of developing countries. Efforts must therefore be made to tackle that phenomenon by providing new, additional, stable and predictable resources.

The Sudan welcomes the Secretary-General's initiative to support and promote human rights at the national level. The Sudan concurs with the African position with regard to the following human rights issues referred to in the Secretary-General's report. First, the universality and coherence of human rights must be respected on a non-selective basis. Secondly, we must strictly abide by the rules that apply with regard to candidature for membership in the Commission on Human Rights, in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. Thirdly, the views of Member States must be sought with regard to any proposals to broaden the mandate of the Resident Coordinator. Operational activities must also be consistent with the principles of impartiality, universality and multilateralism.

Fourthly, while we welcome the reference in the report to the formulation of guidelines to improve the functioning of the special procedures, we stress the need to debate such proposals with Member States, bearing in mind that they must accord with the mandate granted to the special procedures relevant to human rights.

As to parts of the report relating to information, we strongly support the central role played by public information in the work of this Organization and believe that it must be accorded priority in any reform effort. In this context, we believe that an operational programme of action should be prepared, with a budget to be submitted to the General Assembly at its next session. The preparation of the final programme should be preceded by a series of workshops and by specialized studies undertaken by experts from within and outside the Organization, while strongly emphasizing the need to redeploy resources with a view to making the optimum investment in the services of documentation and periodic and daily publications.

My delegation supports efforts to improve the efficiency of the United Nations and the flow of work with regard to its administrative and budgetary aspects. We hope that the revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, which the Secretary-General plans to submit to the General Assembly in 2003, will reflect the priorities of the mid-term plan called for at the Millennium Summit. In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposals for the management of conferences and meetings, as long as they do not affect discussions by the specialized committees relating to improvements in the performance of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.

My delegation views with great interest the Secretary-General's request that he be granted further flexibility and powers for redeploying resources among programmes. In this regard, we look forward to the establishment of the necessary mechanism for accountability and control with the aim of studying that request in all its aspects so as to consider the positive and negative impact that it might have on the mandated programmes and activities. Any mandate of authority must be viewed in the light of the provisions and rules of the Charter so as to allow us to get a clear picture of the mandate and the consequent responsibility and accountability.

My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's intention to review the current internal justice system of the Organization. We believe that such a step will contribute greatly to improving efficiency and to creating a climate of justice, integrity and transparency within the Organization.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like first of all to thank and congratulate the Secretary-General and his team for the report before us today. I would also like to express our gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to the Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette, for having presented the report to the permanent representatives. The document deals with longstanding problems relating to the quality and efficiency of the management of programmes, and it takes up several major points that Switzerland has long held dear. My country appreciates this initiative.

As the Secretary-General said when he introduced the reform programme, the United Nations must re-examine its activities so as to ensure that it focuses on its priorities and does not waste time or money. The central position as set out in the Millennium Declaration provides an important common thread that runs through all of our efforts to strengthen the United Nations. The United Nations and other inter-governmental bodies can thus rally behind common goals. The Millennium Declaration maps out the road to be followed in restructuring the Organization and engaging in effective partnerships. Analysing the activities of the United Nations from this perspective will enable the Organization to refocus its efforts and make better use its limited human and financial resources.

Other changes outlined in the report are designed to achieve the same end. These include the application of sunset provisions, better targeted publications, reports that are fewer in number but of greater use to Member States and meetings that are less frequent but more productive. We understand that this report on the strengthening of the United Nations does not in any way prejudice the priorities of the Millennium road map.

The statements and proposals of the Secretary-General for more constructive action in the field of human rights are particularly welcome. They respond to our concern about further strengthening the tools used to protect and promote human rights. My country is ready to cooperate substantially in the consideration given to this subject. Switzerland shares the concern of the Secretary-General about the dangers of a Commission on Human Rights that is increasingly polarized. As an observer in that body, my country always promoted dialogue rather than confrontation, and we intend to continue our commitment to constructive and open dialogue. Switzerland views

favourably the suggestion that we streamline the current system of reporting to the treaty control bodies. The reporting system must be simplified and made more transparent for States, committees and civil society. A single country report would convey a clearer, more realistic and efficient picture of the implementation of human rights conventions.

Finally, the regular United Nations budget must have sufficient funds to cover the costs incurred by the treaty-control bodies and the special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. We also await with great interest the plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for improving management methods, in particular in the field of human resources.

Improving public information is an important aspect of reform. We are concerned by the fact that United Nations Information Centres in developed countries, where costs are very high, take up 40 per cent of available resources and we welcome, therefore, the proposal to restructure the network of United Nations Information Centres around regional hubs. We note with satisfaction the explanations of the Secretariat that this restructuring of the information network and of conference services will not weaken the capacities in that field of the United Nations Offices at Geneva (UNOG) and Vienna.

Moreover, we are convinced that the United Nations Office at Geneva will be able to play a key role in the future with respect to the European United Nations information hub, not only because the necessary infrastructure and know-how are already in place, but also, thanks to its long tradition of multilingualism and the presence of numerous United Nations specialized agencies and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations.

As for the coordination of United Nations libraries, we understand the logic of integrated management and the need for modernization. We feel however that there could be cause for concern if the proposed measures were to lead to a larger bureaucracy, the creation of new high-level posts or to a transfer of the general management of the United Nations library in Geneva from the Director General of UNOG to the Department of Public Information in New York.

We are further convinced that good management of the archives of the League of Nations, an organization without historic ties to New York, is an argument for keeping the responsibility for these archives in Geneva.

Another important priority of the United Nations is development cooperation, and we greatly appreciate the various proposals made to improve the operational activities of the United Nations system in the field of development. The formulas proposed by the Secretary-General are the logical consequence of discussions within the framework of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. My country would be happy if more consideration were given to the forms which the presence of the United Nations might assume at the country level. We invite the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the matter and make recommendations without losing sight of the absolute need to maintain the universal character of the United Nations.

In the same vein, another area which could benefit from better management of resources is environmental protection, a subject which is also high on the list of Swiss foreign policy priorities. As was recently stressed in the decision of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), financial support of the United Nations for UNEP should be increased to provide the necessary resources to guarantee the continuation of its role as a central pillar in the international environmental system.

With regard to the United Nations budget, we are of the opinion that the planning and budgetary process is still unnecessarily complex and involves a large number of staff. It must undergo thorough reform in order to become more efficient. We would like to see a shorter, more strategic budget reflecting the priorities and working programme of the Organization. Similar reforms have been carried out successfully in several large United Nations specialized agencies, such as the International Labour Organization and the World Health Organization.

As a new Member State of the United Nations, Switzerland is particularly concerned with the budgetary process of peacekeeping operations. The money allocated for the multiplicity of different budgets is more than double the regular budget. What is more, these budgets are extremely difficult to manage within national accounting systems. That is why we fully support the consolidation of mission

budgets, if only to improve the quality of budget estimates in this field.

Finally, Switzerland agrees with the need to reform the intergovernmental organizations. The Economic and Social Council must be strengthened to be in a position to carry out its orientation work concerning important and complex aspects of development on a global scale. My country is ready to participate actively in realizing this goal. In particular it is important to realign the activities of the Economic and Social Council in its crucial mission of ensuring follow-up for United Nations conferences, and of the Millennium Summit in particular.

We also share the opinion that any reform of the United Nations would not be complete without dealing with the question of the composition and working methods of the Security Council. The Council must reflect the world as it is today if it wishes to maintain its authority and credibility. For this reason, my country favours a limited enlargement of Council membership to avoid weakening its ability to make effective decisions. The Security Council reform project needs new political impetus.

In conclusion, we would like once again to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reform proposals. We assure him of our wholehearted support in achieving its goals. In the meantime, we look forward with great interest to the next biennium and to the presentation of a thoroughly revised programme budget reflecting the new priorities of the Organization.

Mr. Hidayat (Indonesia): First of all, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his important report, "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change." I will make a number of general comments, and then turn to some more specific ones.

Indonesia has particular interest in the subject of reform of the United Nations. There is no doubt that every report of this nature is a significant milestone in our efforts to transform the United Nations into the Organization that was envisaged by its founders, as recently confirmed by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration.

It is our view that the demands of multilateralism today commend the effective reform of the United Nations to all its Members, as well as to everyone interested in peace and human progress. Reform of United Nations, as an intergovernmental organ, sh continue to strengthen our ability and our capacit this direction.

In this connection, it is important to reflect on fact that United Nations reform has been with us some years, and we think that is long enough for begin to reflect critically on the process and on benefits. In his summary at the beginning of the re the Secretary-General describes the Organizatio "evolving with the times".

In order to ensure that this process contin towards making the United Nations "more effic more open and more creative", Indonesia would lik stress the need for Member States to remain consc of the fact that reform of the United Nations shoul treated as reform of the entire Organization as a wh and not reform of individual parts over time. Un such a holistic and comprehensive approach is mad a cardinal principle in the reform process — we run risk, at tremendous cost, of finding out down the that key areas of the Organization's work have left behind. However, we must also be careful to in this regard that it is not enough to continue to on the basis of proposals and intentions or to engag reform for its own sake. In the past, there have several proposals that have not brought real reform

The delegation of Indonesia firmly believes reforming the Organization to enable it to perfor optimum efficiency may well begin with the way the United Nations organizes its work. To that end support the proposals made by the Secretary-Gener his report aimed at changing and harmoni procedures and processes within the Organizatio make improvement possible.

Having said that, I will now turn to specifics.

In the area of peace and security it is of utmost importance that reform efforts are clo targeted at eliminating areas of current multila cooperation that militate against progress. To pu another way, we must continue to refine and mo our collective and individual behaviour, within context of the United Nations, to enhance the struct and processes that contribute to peace and security.

In that connection, we concur with observation of the Secretary-General that no refor the United Nations would be complete without re

of the Security Council. If the Council is to continue to enjoy worldwide credibility, which it critically needs for its work, not only must its size, composition and working methods be reviewed, but so must the capacity of the Council to act, to do so promptly, and to be seen to be employing the same standards on every agenda item that comes before it. Indeed, the ability of the Security Council to reform itself comprehensively, as is being demanded by the generality of the membership, is crucial to its credibility.

The immediate and most obvious implication of that is that the credibility of the Council carries over into the willingness and readiness of Member States to implement its resolutions and decisions or to make other contributions towards peace, especially in conflict situations. Even more important, as the most important multilateral body of the United Nations, the reform of the General Assembly must continue. Its overloaded agenda must be reordered and balanced by accommodating new and emerging issues so that the Assembly is stronger and more meaningful in facing new challenges.

In that regard, it is imperative to strengthen the Assembly's relationship vis-à-vis other main organs of the United Nations, such as the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, so that the General Assembly will be able to give added value to the work of the Organization.

It is now a truism that peace and development are related. It is not possible to have one without the other. Given that international peace and security are the first concerns of the United Nations, our commitment to reform is our commitment to development and, therefore, to peace. All our intergovernmental processes, which are anchored in the Charter of the United Nations and the Millennium Declaration, must emphasize the developmental imperative as a condition for fulfilling our obligation to peace.

Similarly, we must continue to keep in mind our responsibility and commitment to a number of social and economic objectives. Those are specific and, in the case of the Millennium Declaration, time-bound goals. In the opinion of my delegation, our reform initiatives and methods must not only be motivated and inspired by those objectives, they must also respond to them. That is because they are real and concern real people somewhere — real people who are waiting for the United Nations to fulfil their expectations.

As a result of that, therefore, we must keep in mind during the reform process that reform is not an objective in itself. Reform is justified by a more basic objective, namely, to enhance our work and deliver the benefits of development and peace. Therefore, the programme of work, which should be organized around the objectives set out in the Millennium Declaration and the results of the main conferences, needs to support the Organization's efforts in the field of development.

In that regard, we welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General to create an additional Assistant Secretary-General post to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. We, however, would like to emphasize that this should ensure that the development programme is the top priority of the Organization.

My delegation notes the attention paid by the Secretary-General to issues and activities concerning Africa. In particular, we support the proposal to assign the Secretary-General's Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa the responsibility of coordinating and guiding the reports and input for Africa-related matters in the Secretariat and to transfer under his responsibility the resources currently allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries.

Human rights, the promotion and protection of which is a bedrock requirement under the Charter for the realization of our vision of a just and peaceful world, is a subject of special interest to my delegation. To that end, we support the proposal by which the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will consult with treaty bodies on new streamlined reporting procedures and submit recommendations to the Secretary-General. Similarly, in connection with the improvement of special procedures, we also support the proposal by which the High Commissioner will undertake a review and make recommendations towards enhancing their effectiveness and improving the support provided.

My delegation understands the need to have more pragmatic action at the field level to integrate human rights components. Many countries have started to adopt upstream projects in the context of the country cooperation framework. However, the principle of such projects being country-driven should be the main consideration in developing projects at the country

level. We would therefore like to express our concern about proposals with a global approach including human rights elements at the field level that might not be priorities of individual Member States, as every country has its own individual characteristics. Moreover, including such elements would be contrary to the principle of country-driven implementation of operational activities for development.

Taking all that into consideration, it is the view of my delegation that the proposal to simplify and improve planning and budgeting merits consideration in order to eliminate some of the burdens of the current arrangements. However, we would like to underline that a streamlined mechanism should not compromise the purpose of carrying out priority programmes mandated by Member States. With particular reference to the proposal to merge the intergovernmental review of plans and budgets now being performed by both the Fifth Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination, under the aegis of the Fifth Committee, we would suggest that careful consideration be exercised in this matter.

Turning to human resources management, we support the initiatives of the Secretary-General towards the attainment of a world-class staff, to enable the Secretariat to deliver adequate services to Member States. We, however, would like to emphasize that any human resources policy adopted by the Secretary-General needs to achieve the imperatives of geographical diversity and gender balance, without compromising excellence in the quality of personnel, who are the strength of the Organization.

We believe it to be the responsibility of Member States to consider carefully the Secretary-General's recommendations contained in this report, and to support fully the decisions arrived at by the General Assembly. It is important to ensure that process is Member State-driven, not Secretariat-driven. We must further ensure that the process is transparent and participatory. With that in mind, Indonesia stands ready and willing to offer its full participation.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): I would like to express our gratitude and thanks to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and all-encompassing report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387). We commend the clear, methodical and action-oriented manner in which he presents his case for reform and innovation. The report indicates very clearly the Secretary-General's bol practical, agenda and far-sighted vision for the U Nations in the new millennium as it confronts the challenges that lie ahead. We also commen Secretary-General for his strong determination to those changes. The report is testimony to his fir unshakeable commitment to the United Nations main and indispensable vehicle towards inc multilateralism in the complex and interconn world we live in today. I would also li acknowledge the role in, and contribution to exercise of Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréc

Let me also say that my delegation asso itself with the views of the Chair of the Group expressed yesterday at in this body with regard report.

Many of the proposals and recommendatio action contained in the report are commendabl can be supported and implemented, especially that fall under the Secretary-General's own aut Others that directly affect Member States wou course, have to be dealt with by them throug appropriate consultative mechanisms.

My delegation fully shares the view th reform and revitalization of the Organization sho an ongoing process involving all of its organ General Assembly, the Security Council, the Eco and Social Council and the Secretariat. Reform just for the sake of reform but has the purp reorienting the Organization and its entire system needs and challenges of our times. We agree that has been achieved. But much remains accomplished. There is a need to ensure th Organization will be able not only to carry traditional role and functions but also to perfor tasks and fulfil new goals in the context of the evolving global situation.

The General Assembly has over the past 10 adopted various decisions and resolutions to rev itself. The ongoing efforts by the President General Assembly to rejuvenate the exerci focusing on the implementation of previous reso should be pursued. We have, in fact, made modest achievements such as, among other thin much welcomed clustering of certain items agenda of the General Assembly and management of conference time and resource decision to have early elections of the Preside

Vice-Presidents of the Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees has also enabled the Organization to plan its timetable more efficiently, thereby contributing to a more effective and meaningful debate.

My delegation fully agrees with the Secretary-General's observation that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Progress on that reform, regrettably, has been painfully slow in spite of almost a decade of deliberations among Member States. We also share his view that a reform process that consisted only of an increase in Council membership would be unlikely to strengthen the Council unless it were accompanied by the capacity to make prompt and realistic decisions and the political will to act on them. We strongly endorse his proposal for a codification of the recent changes in the practice of the Council so that they may become permanent rather than remaining ad hoc or temporary features which may lapse over time.

As an incoming member of the Economic and Social Council, Malaysia places great hopes and expectations on the further strengthening of that important Council and will work with others towards that end. We strongly support the dialogue process that has been established with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, thereby giving the United Nations the important role that it should play in influencing development and socio-economic policies and strategies that affect Member States. We warmly welcome the Secretary-General's intention to ensure improved Secretariat support for the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. That is essential for the more effective functioning of those two principal organs of the United Nations.

My delegation also agrees that the United Nations has a story to tell, and that it must be told in a way that will raise the Organization's prestige and credibility and inspire confidence in, and respect for, it. As the most truly universal intergovernmental organization that deals with a broad range of issues affecting humanity, its achievements, disappointments and future expectations should be told to its diverse audience so as to create a better appreciation of the many constraints, difficulties and challenges that it faces, as well of the opportunities that could be harnessed with the support of Member States. The Department of Public Information has an important role to play as an information conduit between the Organization and its peoples. Malaysia strongly supports the efforts to reposition the Department to face the challenges of the new century so as to enable it to implement its mandate.

The Secretary-General had already submitted a comprehensive review of the Department of Public Information (A/AC.198/2002/2) to the Committee on Information in May 2002. The actions proposed by the Secretary-General in his present report are very similar to those submitted to the Committee on Information. We look forward to a fruitful discussion of this in the Fourth Committee.

Action 1, to submit to the General Assembly in 2003 a thoroughly revised programme budget that better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly, constitutes an important and commendable step towards achieving the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration. It is proposed that attention should also be given to achieving goals and targets set at other United Nations conferences and summits, particularly the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The revised budget suggested by the Secretary-General in that action should take into account not only the goals and targets set in the Millennium Declaration but also the targets and goals contained in the outcomes of other relevant conferences and summits.

Malaysia welcomes the implementation plan that will soon be developed to strengthen the effectiveness of the Organization's presence in developing countries. The proposed action plan which includes, inter alia, joint programming, pooling of resources, common databases and knowledge networks, dedicated support for resident coordinators, and integrated planning, budgeting and resources mobilization tools for countries emerging from conflicts are, indeed, laudable and deserve strong support. These are practical measures designed to further enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations system, premised on the best and most efficient utilization of its resources. We trust there will be close consultations with national Governments, as the principal clients of United Nations in-country programmes and activities, in order to ensure the full participation of Member States in developing any new planning mechanisms or instruments, including the common country assessment, common reporting and joint evaluations and resource mobilization tools at the national level.

We also welcome the proposal for a document clarifying roles and responsibilities in the area of technical cooperation, which is to be prepared by a target date of September 2003. We believe that it will help address the problem of duplication and overlap. Clarifying who does what in the area of technical cooperation is, indeed, very important, given the limited resources, capabilities and programme-reach of the international institutions.

My delegation supports the proposal to create an additional position of Assistant Secretary-General to support policy coherence and management in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the establishment of a policy planning unit in that Department. In our view, the creation of such a post is important, as the issue of coherence is well reflected in the Monterrey Consensus. It is, however, important to avoid any duplication of mandates, and it is important that the Assistant Secretary-General appointed should have the responsibility and capacity to interact effectively with the institutional and other stakeholders identified in the Monterrey Consensus, including the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization.

Given the special problems of Africa, we support the proposal to have the Secretary-General's Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa coordinate and guide the preparation of reports and input for Africa-related debates of the General Assembly and its subsidiary bodies. To that end, resources allocated to the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries should be transferred to the Adviser's Office. This proposal is in line with the resolution adopted on the New Partnership for Africa's Development. We look forward to receiving more information from the Secretary-General on the organization and structure of the Office, as requested by the resolution. We support the merging of the Special Coordinator's Office with the Office of the Adviser as a further effort to consolidate and effectively address the issues of development in Africa.

Mr. Laoteggueinodji (Chad), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We also welcome the Secretary-General's proposal to enhance and increase the opportunities for promotion to the Professional level of the General Service Staff. Such staff should be rewarded not only because they are a source of skill and expertise but also because they are the Organization's priceless treasure, as they hold a large portion of the institutional memory of the United Nations. We also support the Secretary-General's idea to help United Nations staff balance their professional and private lives and to rejuvenate and reinvigorate the Organization by attracting and retraining younger people. In that regard, we fully support the continuing improvement in and innovation of the area of human resources management.

On the issue of human rights, my delegation takes note of action 2 contained in the report. We note in particular that the measures outlined in the report pertain to the incorporation of human rights standards into the country programmes of its specialized agencies, funds and programmes without any mention being made of requests by States or of collaboration with them. This issue has been extensively debated as far back as 1997, when the Secretary-General first presented a report on reforms (A/51/590 and Add.1-6). My delegation was among those that were against this idea; our position on the issue has not changed.

We note also that in developing and implementing a plan to strengthen human-rights-related actions at the country level, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights would only be consulting with the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs. We certainly hope that Member States will have a role in the exercise, given the fact that these actions and programmes are to be implemented at the national level, which would necessarily require close consultations with Governments.

We welcome the proposal that the High Commissioner for Human Rights make recommendations on new streamlined reporting procedures, as proposed in action 3. However, since members of treaty bodies serve in their individual capacities, and since not all parties are represented in any given treaty body at any given time, my delegation would strongly recommend that the High Commissioner consult with Member States parties to each of the six treaties, as opposed to only Committee members. We also look forward to a proper discussion of the High Commissioner's recommendations to the Secretary-General when he submits them in September 2003.

My delegation is fully supportive of action 4. We have long believed that the various special procedures

created need to be more coherent. Special rapporteurs, for instance, play an important role in the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. Their credibility will be greatly enhanced and their mandate respected if they operate under the principles of fairness, objectivity and non-selectivity. In other words, they must manifest the highest standards of professionalism in carrying out their mandates. It is in that regard that the High Commissioner has a role to play to ensure that these principles become a mainstay of the operationalization of the mandates of the special procedures. Again, my delegation looks forward to discussing the recommendations to be put forward by the High Commissioner in 2003 in that regard.

My delegation welcomes the concept of working better together, both within the system and with civil society. We note the intention to forge enhanced interaction with civil society and the Secretary-General's decision to establish a high-level panel to make recommendations in that regard. We note, too, his intention to establish a partnership office to coordinate the relationship with the private sector. We welcome these initiatives, but we must not lose sight of the essentially intergovernmental character of the United Nations.

We are particularly attracted to the new approach and different way of doing the business of the United Nations advocated by the Secretary-General. However, given the sheer size of the United Nations and its entire system and the difficulty of effecting and managing change involving a vast bureaucracy, the challenges are enormous and will require determined and sustained effort on the part of the Secretary-General and his staff as well as strong and sustained support by Member States. The goals are clear and the strategies for the attainment of those goals appear to be sound. What remain are the determination and resolve or will to carry the process forward in a step-by-step but expeditious fashion involving all stake-holders. Therein lies the challenge. My delegation will play a constructive role in the process.

Mr. Fall (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): First and foremost, I would like, on behalf of my delegation, to address my compliments to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the fruitful efforts he has made together with his outstanding team since 1997 to have our Organization adopt an innovative strategy commensurate with the breadth, complexity and diversity of the challenges which face mankind at the beginning of this millennium.

While in recent years we have observed real and laudable progress in rationalizing United Nations activities, it must be noted that in this particular area a number of improvements still seem to be necessary and possible, as suggested by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387).

While fully associating myself with the views expressed so brilliantly by my good friend Ambassador Aboul Gheit, Permanent Representative of Egypt, on behalf of the African Group, I would like to briefly single out some aspects which, in our view, are of particular importance.

I reaffirm how firmly Senegal supports the proposal of the Secretary-General to ensure that the various components of our Organization work better together — I would almost say in synergy — to make their action more coordinated, more purposeful and more effective. That is why we believe that the reforms should measure up to the goals we have laid out by meeting one fundamental criterion: efficiency. Thus, the pooling of resources and the joint programming of activities of the various components of the United Nations should not undermine what the Organization does or lead to bottlenecks or overlapping in relations between the United Nations and the various areas in which it works.

This concern for efficiency and clarity should also be strictly observed at United Nations Headquarters, where the Secretary-General has created the post of Adviser for Special Assignments in Africa, thus reflecting the resolve of the United Nations to get solidly in step with the reiterated determination of the heads of State and the peoples of Africa to make the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) the preferred framework for a strong alliance between the continent and its partners.

To that end, we think it is of paramount importance to ensure that the Adviser, far from confining himself to preparing for routine meetings on Africa, should also get down to the task of promoting and coordinating the support of all our friends for the genuine implementation of NEPAD's goals.

This concern for clarity is equally applicable to the proposal of the Secretary-General that the

partnership among the United Nations, civil society and the private sector should be strengthened in a matter which is of considerable urgency these days, that is the burning question of human rights.

How can we better ensure that these rights are exercised fully on the national and global levels? Is the system of treaties and special procedures of the Commission on Human Rights still well adapted to the current international context? And what role can the United Nations play to modernize them if necessary? The report of the Secretary-General has raised real issues and has sketched out a number of real replies which call for more dynamic and thorough — some might even say holistic — consideration.

It is true that States parties to international legal instruments on human rights are weighed down by complex, rigid and daunting obligations which are difficult to perform, particularly the requirement to submit periodic reports according to strict timetables, reports whose relevance and frequency, and therefore unrealistic number, need to be reviewed in the light of the additional constraints thus imposed on small Member States.

Nonetheless, Senegal maintains that it is up to States parties, within the framework of competent statutory bodies, to consider this range of problems, which will certainly require an amendment to international treaties. To that end, perhaps a joint meeting of all States parties to the various international instruments related to human rights could be convened as a special measure.

In any event, my delegation believes that today, we must rationalize institutional and legal human rights machinery, even in the thicket of the 40 existing special procedures. In that connection, Senegal considers that the comments of the African Group concerning the part of the Secretary-General's report devoted to human rights should be taken into account in any reform project — that is, reform of the institutional architecture and of the modernization of human rights mechanisms, including in the context of United Nations actions to reach out to the public at large.

My delegation, therefore, highly values the crucial role of the Department of Public Information, both in promoting the objectives and strategies of the Organization and in the regular follow-up of its programmes. More generally, my delegation would like to endorse the Secretary-General's recommendations aimed at establishing a policy of monitoring and evaluation of the information sector's impact on the Organization's activities, which should be marked by transparency and effectiveness. That unquestionably justifies the remodelling of Information Centres — an exercise that, in developing countries and particularly in Africa, must be carried out in a far-sighted, prudent and methodical way because of the lack of resources available to the Centres and their positive impact on the media environment of the countries concerned.

As a corollary, we must give some thought to the real desirability and the exorbitant cost of the endless succession of summits, world conferences and other United Nations meetings — the Secretary-General lists no fewer than 15,484 during the biennium 2000-2001 — whose existence and disappointing results erode, devalue or obliterate the value, relevance and authority of the regular and special sessions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council — a body of which my country has just become a member.

With regard to the innumerable reports and follow-ups — reports are estimated at 5,879 — which few delegations have the leisure to read or even to peruse, my delegation would like to cite the chronic problem of quality, volume and delays with regard to publishing documentation, deploring the fact that Member States — particularly those delegations that speak French — are not always treated the same, the sacrosanct principle of multilingualism notwithstanding.

Hence the twofold need, first, to reduce significantly the number of official meetings and the frightening volume of documentation, and secondly, to strengthen the Department of Public Information with adequate budgetary resources and the means to, inter alia, update the United Nations web site daily in all official languages. That was proposed by Russia, which Senegal joins in criticizing the growing gap between English and the other official languages, without prejudice regarding the urgent need, cited by the United States, to establish a reliable protection system for global electronic information networks and the Internet through the creation of a world culture of cybersecurity.

Also important is the recurrent question of strengthening the working relations between the Department of Public Information and the Department

of Peacekeeping Operations so as to ensure, through the efficient management of information, the increased effectiveness and legitimacy of peacekeeping operations.

In that connection, the problem of the financial fragility of the United Nations arises once again with even more urgency because of the exorbitant and mounting arrears in assessments, which by 30 September amounted to $2.4 billion, half of which is owed by one Member State, principally for peacekeeping operations. Such a situation, totally at odds with commitments proclaimed elsewhere, seriously compromises the capacity of the United Nations to carry out its mandates and to reimburse troop contributors. With the assistance of Member States, the Secretary-General absolutely must resolve the daunting equation faced by the developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, such as Senegal. The least developed countries suffer considerably from the arrears and delays in reimbursement, to the extent that some States run the risk — and we have seen this repeatedly in the recent past — of having to confront situations of revolt, instability and even armed rebellion sometimes caused by rules and delays with respect to the payment of sums owed by the United Nations for peacekeeping operations.

It is gratifying to note that the report of the Secretary-General has not lost sight, furthermore, of the need to rationalize administrative and budgetary practices in order to facilitate the effective management of the Organization's priorities. In that context, the revised programme budget to be presented in 2003 by the Secretary-General must somehow integrate the development goals set by the Millennium Summit and those of the Monterrey and Johannesburg Summits, as well as the other priorities set forth in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

In the process of updating and fine-tuning procedures, it is especially important that scrupulous respect be paid to the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms covering programme planning and execution as well as human resource management, taking due account of the enlightening observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), which are generally endorsed by the Fifth Committee.

In conclusion, I should like once again to pay tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan and to Deputy Secretary-General Louise Fréchette for this excellent report, which is edifying in many respects and which, enriched by the contributions of Member States, will be as valuable as the effectiveness of the proposals that are acted upon. That is why we think it crucial to categorize the proposals and to determine the levels at which their implementation should be carried out, with the understanding that appropriate administrative leeway and budgetary flexibility should be accorded the Secretary-General — of course, with the hindsight of the ACABQ.

Introducing those changes to the architecture of the United Nations must obey certain principles of structural and managerial order. Furthermore, in our view, it will realize a philosophy that is gradually gaining ground in an Organization intended to repudiate the world order of 1945, in order to celebrate in its actions the perennial ideals of justice and democracy. In other words, the field of reform is so vast that, we hope, Member States will soon reconsider the working methods of bodies such as the Security Council and its growing propensity to invest in areas of activity that are under the purview of the General Assembly or of the Economic and Social Council, instead of focusing systematically, rather than circumstantially, on its true statutory reason for being: to promote peace and security.

The United Nations must be more ready to shoulder its primary responsibilities and to realize the humanistic principle of multilateralism by resolutely rising to the requirements of democratic transparency, which the new configuration of international relations must necessarily reflect.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The strengthening of an institution consists of strengthening its organs. The fact that we are at present engaged in the task of finding the best way to improve the functioning of three of the five major organs of the United Nations that are still active is eloquent evidence of the need to adapt the Organization to the demands of an international society which is itself evolving constantly.

The reforms in each of those three organs are being carried out separately, but they all seek the same goal: to make those organs more effective instruments for achieving our common goals. But the modalities of

each of those processes are different. With respect to the Security Council, we are seeking the reform of its membership in order to make it more representative and more democratic. As for the General Assembly, we are attempting to revitalize it so that its decisions regain their authority and political legitimacy. In the Secretariat, the goal is changes in its functioning to improve its efficiency. Those three processes are closely linked and, to an extent, the results of each process will affect the results of the other two. But in spite of those close connections, we believe the reform processes should continue to be carried out as they have been so far: separately, each one in its respective sphere of competence.

We are meeting today to examine the measures that the Secretary-General proposes in his report (A/57/387 and Corr.1) in order to make changes in specific areas under his responsibility. The common idea underpinning all those measures is that the Organization should focus its activities on issues that are most important at present and on those that will be most important in the future.

Uruguay fully agrees with the objectives set out in the report and the general orientation of the changes proposed. We particularly welcome initiatives to strengthen institutions and mechanisms that ensure universality and respect for human rights. The great work accomplished by the United Nations over the first two decades of its existence, which put the protection of human rights on the international agenda in a definitive and irreversible manner, cannot be left incomplete. To ensure that human beings the world over have full enjoyment of their rights, we must strengthen monitoring mechanisms and develop means to bring offenders before the law. The proposals of the Secretary-General are an important step in that direction.

Uruguay is now in a position to support many of the measures proposed in the report, not only in the area of human rights but also in the areas of public information and the budgeting and planning process.

We have doubts on some of those measures. In the course of the informal consultations held last week, the Group of 77 asked the Secretary-General a number of questions. We trust that the additional information to be provided by the Secretary-General in response to those questions will dispel our doubts.

My delegation understands that, w prejudice to these misgivings, the Secretary-G should proceed to put into practice those mea whose implementation does not require the app o the Assembly, for example, the preparatio combined reports, which would be more condense concise. When we see the results of that measur can decide whether it is a good idea. This procedu carrying out a measure then judging the results s be applied to all those measures that the Secr General has the power to put into practice.

With regard to measures relating to the syst planning and budgeting, I would like to recall th Organization has already demonstrated its spir renewal and its capacity to adapt in that area. Tha demonstrated by the introduction of results-b budgeting.

We welcome the fact that the Secretary-Ge has based his proposed changes in the fiel budgeting and planning on the criterion of refle the priorities of the international community formulated in the Millennium Declaration. It is that in order to identify those priorities, we hav draw on the outcomes of the Monterrey Conferen Financing for Development and the Johannes Summit on Sustainable Development. The Secre General has promised us for next year a re programme budget that better reflects the ag priorities. We look forward with great interes receiving that text.

But, above all else, focusing our efforts priorities will depend on changes in the wor methods and functioning of the General Assembl the consultations on the revitalization of the Assem we will continue to suggest measures to enable organ to focus on the most important issues.

The recommendation for improving plannin the budgetary process is well supported in the re The proposal for a mid-term plan focused on a pe of time closer to the present is in keeping with changing challenges the Organization faces. Simil an outline of the budget, which would be detailed briefer, combined with the mid-term plan, undoubtedly facilitate the process of negotiating budget and its approval.

We have certain reservations about the Secret General's request for greater flexibility in transfer resources between programmes and budgetary ite

The Secretary-General should provide us with more detailed information. The problem lies in the fact that in our national administration — and I believe this is the case in other national administrations — a fundamental principle of planning and budgetary performance is the prohibition on transferring funding from one programme to another. That prohibition exists at all levels of national administration. Even in the case of the very limited budget of our own mission, we cannot reallocate funds. I do not know whether it would be acceptable to apply in an international organization practices prohibited in national administrations.

Furthermore, we are concerned that funds destined for programmes assisting developing countries might be reallocated to finance other activities that the Secretary-General considers a high priority. Naturally, we have complete confidence in the good judgement and discretion of the Secretary-General. But it might happen that in some cases, his priorities may be different from ours. Something that continues to occur is that funds allocated for peacekeeping operations are used to finance other expenses of the Organization. We cannot agree with that practice. Delays in the payment of the personnel of a peacekeeping operation, in particular, delays in reimbursement for the use of equipment has created financial problems for us, sometimes serious ones. For that reason, I suggest the request for greater flexibility in reassigning resources should be accompanied by proposals for some kind of consultative procedure or prior supervisory procedure in which the General Assembly or the countries concerned would take part.

The Secretary-General is very eloquent in highlighting the deficiencies that exist in the budgeting and planning process. There is no doubt that radical changes should be made. The Group of 77 would like to know, among other things, if the Secretary-General is suggesting the elimination of the Committee for Programme (CPC) and Coordination, a possibility that should not be dismissed — after, of course, the case has been properly made. That body, according to the report, is costly, complicates procedures and results in duplication. Certainly, if we eliminate the CPC — a body, I would note in passing, of which Uruguay has been, and is still, a member — the work of the Fifth Committee would be increased. However, this could be partly offset by a slight increase in the membership of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The report we are considering abounds in ideas and proposals that give my delegation considerable food for thought. We hope to have an opportunity to express our views at subsequent stages of this process.

Mr. Sun Joun-yung (Republic of Korea): We join other Member States in welcoming the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on strengthening the United Nations. The findings and recommendations contained in the report merit our serious consideration.

My delegation agrees with the view of the Secretary-General that United Nations reform is not an event but an ongoing process, with room for further improvement. In this regard, we consider the report to be a timely and appropriate initiative as a follow-up to the first phase of the 1997 reform initiative.

In considering the issue of Security Council reform, we need to proceed in a manner that is both democratic and reflective of our current environment. My delegation is of the view that, due to the inter-linkages between the Council's structure and its decision-making procedures, these issues are best considered in a single context. With regard to the issue of enlargement, since we believe that as many Member States as possible should be given the opportunity to serve on the Council, we consider the suggestion of increasing only the number of non-permanent seats to be a viable option.

Of equal importance is the need to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council, in the light of the important global economic and social concerns that it is being called upon to address. We would like to acknowledge the progress made in organizing its work to give greater focus to thematic issues such as the establishment of dialogue between the Economic and Social Council, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. We believe that it is important for us to follow up and hold periodic reviews on concretizing this channel of cooperation. At the same time, we need to ensure that the agenda and format of the Economic and Social Council are more focused and that effective preparations are made for its session.

The holding of numerous United Nations global conferences has burdened not only the Secretariat but

also its Member States. We acknowledge that United Nations global conferences and the Millennium Declaration have had a positive impact through the promotion of international cooperation on issues of importance, inter alia, in the field of development. However, we believe that the time has come to take stock of the results achieved so far in those forums. In particular, my delegation is of the view that, from now on, emphasis should be placed on the process of implementation of the outcomes.

Let me now turn to actions to reform human rights mechanisms. All four areas identified in the Secretary-General's report are important. Of these, my delegation places particular emphasis on the need to streamline the reporting procedures to the six treaty bodies. We believe that progress is required in both directions: greater coordination and standardization of work among the committees and reduction of the burden on the States parties. In all cases, the integrity of the treaty bodies should be upheld. We would also like to point out that endeavours to mainstream human rights into all activities of the United Nations should be sustained and strengthened.

The reform policy of the Department of Public Information should focus on selective and important fields, but only after a cost-effective assessment is undertaken. Regarding its structural reform, it would be better to make changes to the existing organization than to establish a new one.

We further believe that structural reform should be implemented in line with the information technology trends of the twenty-first century. The information age in which we live has made it much easier to access information. In this regard, we welcome the integration of 13 United Nations Information Centres in Western Europe into a regional hub. Apart from establishing an effective information hub, this process will conserve the resources needed for pursuing priority activities. In due course, a similar approach could be adopted for the other regions. Furthermore, my delegation is of the view that printed publications should be further streamlined and reduced, in light of the Department of Public Information's plan to strengthen and centralize its Web-based communication.

My delegation looks forward to the Secretary-General's submission of a thoroughly revised programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 that appropriately reflects the priorities set by Millennium Declaration and other major conferen

We hope that, in the preparation and subm of the next biennium budget, the Secretariat will out a critical review of the current programme activities, and identify outputs and activities whi considered obsolete, of marginal usefulnes ineffective. Those outputs and activities shou listed and presented to the General Assembly as of the proposed programme budget, whereb Member States could decide which outputs activities should be terminated and which ones s be kept alive in our future work programme.

In the case of new programmes, my dele supports the inclusion of sunset provisions to e that regular reviews are made, and believes renewals should be granted only by explicit acti the Assembly.

We also stress that the multifarious trust should be consolidated and their manage streamlined, so as to improve the overall contro administration of the funds.

Regarding the allocation of resource priorities, my delegation concurs with the Secr General's assessment that the current planning budgeting process should be streamlined coherence and coordination among budg implementation and evaluation processes shou further strengthened so that one phase of the b cycle may serve as a framework for the subse phases.

My delegation further believes that the re proposals of the two-year medium-term plan realignment of the functions of the Committe Programme and Coordination and the Fifth Comm and the strengthening of evaluation and monit should be discussed in detail and elaborated withi appropriate bodies of the United Nations.

My delegation has taken note of the propos grant the Secretary-General more flexibilit reallocating programmes and between staff and staff costs. In our view, should any change i current mechanism be deemed necessary after f deliberations, it should be carried out in a way enhances the efficient use of resources and en managerial accountability.

The United Nations staff is an important asset and a vital link to the performance of this Organization. The successful implementation of the programmes and mandates is very much dependent upon the performance of the staff. Therefore, in order to revitalize the Organization, its staff must be highly motivated, competent and up to the task.

In the past, we have seen many cases of competent young professionals leaving the Organization due to lack of career prospects and other reasons. In order to attract, motivate and retain a highly competent staff as a matter of priority, we must put a reasonable and transparent personal management system in place.

My delegation welcomes the new system of management put into operation on 1 May 2002. We hope that this new system will be instrumental in enhancing objectivity and transparency in recruitment, placement and promotion. As has been proposed by the Secretary-General, horizontal staff mobility must be enhanced throughout the United Nations system. The performance appraisal should be further reviewed. Moreover, delegation of authority should follow clear lines of authority and stress managerial responsibility and accountability.

Regarding the Secretary-General's proposal to lift the restrictions on the promotion of General Service staff to the Professional category, my delegation still believes that the national competitive examination programme is the best and fairest means of recruiting professional staff to the Organization at the entry level. This is especially appropriate in the light of the need for equal treatment between internal and external candidates, the age profile of the staff, and equitable geographical distribution.

Another matter of concern to my delegation is the proposal to create a new Assistant-Secretary-General post in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. My delegation would like to see further consideration of this matter in the context of the next biennium budget before we make a final decision.

My delegation takes note that many of the proposals contained in the Secretary-General's report have potential financial implications. While not viewing the reform process as only a budget-cutting exercise, my delegation strongly believes that budgetary discipline should be one of the guiding principles in our deliberations on the proposed reform initiatives.

In closing, my delegation looks forward to participating actively in the discussions of the reform package proposed by the Secretary-General with a view to achieving our common objective of a revitalized United Nations.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the document entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", which represents another stage in the ongoing process of reform of the United Nations. We believe that we must move forward in this process even more quickly than we have until now. In this statement, I will mention only some priorities.

In order to be more efficient, we need to strengthen the main bodies of the United Nations and their cooperation so as to be able to avoid overlaps and duplication and to encourage the complementarity of our work. The Economic and Social Council has already started to undertake steps towards the rationalization of its work and better coordination between its functional commissions and various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. The process of revitalization of the General Assembly has just begun and we believe that we need to take bigger steps and decisions in order to make this universal forum stronger, its work more efficient and its decisions more respected.

As there is a broad consensus on some issues, we believe that, with dedicated joint efforts and the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, we can move forward in quite a short period of time. The process of the reform of the Security Council will probably take longer, but we should continue with the dialogue. We need creative thinking and probably a sort of package deal in which each of us will gain more than lose. Let me remind members that the dialogue on Security Council reform has already had some beneficial side effects, for example better transparency and the opening of the Council's work.

Cooperation between the main United Nations bodies is also improving. In 2002, the participation of the President of the Economic and Social Council in the deliberations of the Security Council has become an established practice whenever appropriate. The same applies to the participation of the President of the Security Council in the work of the Economic and

Social Council. The ad hoc groups on Africa of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council are also cooperating closely. If the experiment with the establishment of the Economic and Social Council's Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau turns out to be successful, which I firmly believe it will, it will pave the way for similar future post-conflict peace-building activities and open a whole new chapter regarding possible close cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. The work of the General Assembly — especially its Second and Third Committees — and the Economic and Social Council should be better coordinated as well. The issue has been discussed at the level of the Presidents of the two bodies, but it requires more systematic efforts and a comprehensive solution.

Finally, the Economic and Social Council's cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization should be strengthened and better structured. This cooperation is beneficial to both. The Bretton Woods institutions will thereby increase their legitimacy, while the Economic and Social Council will benefit from its increased influence and leverage in global decision-making.

We fully support the Secretary-General's opinion that we must align our activities with priorities. We have clear instructions and goals that we all agreed upon in the Millennium Declaration. In that regard, we support the intention of the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly in 2003 a thoroughly revised programme budget that better reflects the priorities agreed to at the Millennium Assembly. We also commend the Secretary-General for suggesting that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector be included much more in our work. We should be open to cooperation and should be creative in finding new ways to bring NGOs and the private sector on board.

In today's globalizing world, efforts to promote and protect human rights have, or should have, a universal character. Therefore, we fully welcome the section of the report concerned with strengthening human rights. We share the opinion of the Secretary-General that Member States should be governed, in voting on and debating issues before the Commission on Human Rights, by the genuine effort to strengthen human rights throughout the world. Attainment of human rights promotion and protection goals should not be diverted by various political deal credibility of the Commission should jeopardized.

Besides the Commission on Human R are a number of treaty bodies and hu mechanisms and procedures that constitute intricate framework. The size and comple system should be addressed by a more approach to their activities. This is espe when we look at the reporting requireme committees under major human rights t conventions, which should be standar streamlined.

The Republic of Croatia firmly be effort.s for the promotion and protection rights must begin at the national level. The strongly support the proposed action to human-rights-related United Nations activi country level.

In conclusion, we firmly believe tha move more quickly in the reform process support the intention of the Secretary-G undertake, within his authority, some of t cited in the report. We think that the report c guidelines regarding activities that should upon among States, and that we should not deliberations. My delegation is ready t participate in that process.

Mr. Nambiar (India): On behalf of I happy to participate in this debate on strengt United Nations system and to have the opp offer the comments of my delegation on the made by the Secretary-General in his repo "Strengthening of the United Nations: an further change" (A/57/387). We would like our appreciation to the Deputy Secretar Ms. Louise Fréchette, for the detailed explan gave during various interactions and at the consultations convened by the President of t Assembly on 24 October 2002.

We would like to convey our deep appr the Secretary-General for coming forward wi comprehensive proposals for continuing h agenda as a sequel to the proposals that he pr the beginning of his first term, in July *A/51/950 and Add.1-6*). The proposals cove functional areas and the working of the Or

and give suggestions for improvement from both strategic and practical perspectives.

Like many other delegations, India looks upon reform as a continuing process — a kind of work in progress. The United Nations has had several reform exercises, beginning with the expansion of the Security Council in the mid-1960s. Planning and programme budgets were introduced in the mid-1970s, and attempts at restructuring the intergovernmental machinery and Secretariat support structures in the economic and social field were made in the late 1980s. Over the past three years there have been attempts to revitalize the working of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The reform proposals of the Secretary-General form part of that sequence of exercises. It is for the Member States to try to give effect and substance to this felt need to improve the working of the United Nations.

Like many other delegations, India has expressed broad political support for the process of reforms. We have done this at different levels since the proposals of the Secretary-General for reforms were presented last month. This is in line with our belief that the effectiveness of the United Nations and the enhancement of its responsiveness to the priorities of Member States are critical, particularly for the developing countries that constitute the vast majority of its membership.

Before commenting on specific elements of the package of proposals put forward by the Secretary-General, it is pertinent to recall that some of the other agenda items being considered by the General Assembly are also related to this item. We have in mind, in particular, the items relating to the revitalization of the General Assembly (agenda item 53) and to the integrated follow-up to global conferences (agenda item 92). It is important to take a holistic view of the structures and processes so that the reforms and changes sought to be introduced under the various items pull together in the same direction and endure in the long run.

The Secretary-General has clarified at the outset that the reform proposals should not be seen as an exercise in cost-cutting. The reform measures should have the primary objective of increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization. If, at the end of the exercise, it is found that the costs will go up as a result of the restructuring, Member States should demonstrate the requisite political will to support the reform measures by agreeing to such increase in expenses.

We note that there are some reform measures that are within the competence of the Secretary-General and that effect can be given to these under his own authority. It is only in those areas that require the prior approval of Member States or where there is need for joint action with Member States that he will need the General Assembly to provide specific authorization. Even here, we discern that there are some measures which could be implemented without much difficulty. There are some areas where a process could be initiated after the General Assembly authorizes the Secretary-General to launch such process.

There are still other areas where Member States may need to seek clarification before authorizing the Secretary-General to effect changes or initiate processes. We feel that any decision or resolution by the General Assembly on the reform proposals will need to bring out these categories clearly and spell out the position of Member States in some detail.

As time is limited, we shall not comment on each of the numerous proposals made by the Secretary-General. Instead, we shall give some comments on just a few. We agree wholeheartedly with the Secretary-General that no reform of the United Nations would be complete without a restructuring of the Security Council to make it more representative and to invest its actions with legitimacy and authority. We continue to attach a high degree of importance to the reform and restructuring of the Security Council, including expansion of its membership in both the permanent and the non-permanent categories, with adequate representation of the developing countries among the new permanent and non-permanent members.

We agree with the Secretary-General in according the highest priority to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This is a testimony to the priority attached by the Secretary-General to socio-economic development and his commitment to making socio-economic development the centrepiece of United Nations activities.

The Secretary-General has spoken for all of us by calling for fewer meetings and fewer reports. However, the critical task is to determine what to include and what to exclude. Given the size and diversity of this world body, this is an area that requires careful

consideration and agreement at a political level. We feel it would be optimal for the Secretary-General to come up with a set of proposals on reducing both the number of meetings and the volume of documentation along the lines suggested in the section on serving Member States, for consideration by the Member States.

We agree with the Secretary-General on the need to continuously update the programme of work, and to identify and dispense with mandates and activities that are no longer relevant. The sunset provisions should cover both new mandates and existing activities. If that is not done we shall have the anomalous situation of subjecting every new initiative and mandate to specific time-limits, while those items that have stretched out over the years will continue to figure on the agendas of various bodies long after becoming completely obsolete. Without doubt, the General Assembly will have to assume the responsibility for reviewing and renewing mandates through explicit action.

We welcome the proposal by the Secretary-General in the field of human rights to initiate processes to rationalize, streamline and reduce the burden of reporting requirements, particularly for developing countries. We trust that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights will consult Member States at the appropriate stage before finalizing his recommendations formulated in consultation with treaty bodies. Similarly, we also expect consultations with Member States on the review of special procedures.

We are somewhat concerned by the proposals contained in paragraphs 50 and 51 of the report, by which the resident coordinator system at the country level, which oversees operational activities for development and development cooperation, would be mandated to incorporate human rights activities at the country level. Our concern stems from the possibility that the very limited resources currently available for technical cooperation in development areas, and particularly in crucial areas of human resources development, would now be diverted to human rights, good governance and other softer areas of development. Although many of the international conferences have pledged additional resources for development, capacity-building and technical cooperation, these have hardly been forthcoming. In such circumstances, entrusting the resident coordinator system with promoting human rights at the country level would only be at the expense of technical cooperation. That would hardly be to most developing countries.

There are also two other attendant in First, there would be a tendency to shift resources away from traditional areas on th country-driven programming, that is, on the the United Nations system is merely res changes in the "demands" of recipient Secondly, grant assistance would be u advocacy and advice from outside, whic welcome development and which could, at the borderline between advice and decisi That would be an undesirable feature that to undermine the time-tested characterist United Nations system, namely, responsiveness, universality and impartiality

We have taken note of the proposals r area of enhancing public information, and i of those for expanding educational out imparting greater dynamism to the activi Department of Public Information. In pri welcome the Secretary-General's proposal regional information hubs instead of the cur of United Nations information centres i Europe, where such centres drain away a l of the resources of the Department. Ho would like to study the implications of ext to developing-country regions, where th have been performing valuable services. other proposals of the Secretary-General to the Department and improve oversight of p Given its activism, image and leadership, we doubt that these initiatives will stren Department's overall effectiveness.

The proposals of the Secretary-G strengthen the effectiveness of the field-lev in developing countries include joint progra pooling of resources. Such attempts have be the past too, but not with considerable s hope that the current efforts will be more suc

The Secretary-General plans to document within the next year clarifying responsibilities in the area of technical coop also plans to establish a panel of eminent review the relationship between the United N civil society. In the case of the former, we th document will not only clarify

responsibilities but also suggest ways and means of enhancing the technical capacity of the Secretariat units responsible for technical cooperation and identify the needs in this area as well as means of achieving them. Similarly, in the case of the panel on the United Nations relationship with civil society, we hope that the terms of reference of the panel will be so drawn as to preserve the intergovernmental character of the Organization and to clarify the responsibility that ultimately devolves on Governments for the decisions made at the United Nations and for their implementation.

An area that requires much deeper consideration and further thought is that of the new planning and budget system that the Secretary-General has proposed. The measures outlined by the Secretary-General for a medium-term plan that is co-terminus with the budget period might well be a workable proposition, but it clearly needs more careful and detailed analysis.

The Secretary-General appears to advocate the abolition of the Committee for Programme and Coordination, without giving us any alternatives by which the mandate of the Committee could be redesigned so as to respond to contemporary needs and realities. The Secretary-General has asked for flexibility to reallocate resources between programmes and between allocations for personnel and other allocations by up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period. Even within national systems of Government, it is doubtful whether such wide latitude and flexibility would be permitted by the ministries of finance to line ministries to reallocate resources between budget lines by up to 10 per cent within a single budgetary period. This is an area whose implications require careful consideration. We are also concerned that high levels of reallocation without reference to, and the approval of, intergovernmental bodies would have the potential to distort intergovernmental mandates. Once again, developing countries might end up as the losers.

We have taken note of the proposals made by the Secretary-General to enhance staff motivation and mobility across the United Nations system. We feel strongly that the experience accumulated over the years by the Secretariat divisions in charge of human resources management, the International Civil Service Commission, the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and similar bodies should be fully utilized when undertaking the tasks outlined in actions 25 to 35 of the Secretary-General's proposals.

Those are some of my delegation's preliminary views on the reform proposals made by the Secretary-General. We look forward to working with other delegations in the discussions and consultations that will take place. In a larger sense, we agree with the perception, so forcefully brought out by the Deputy Secretary-General in a recent article, that the United Nations as an Organization needs to provide management and cooperation at the global level to address the broader issues confronting the world — issues that transcend borders. Addressing that challenge calls for three broad initiatives involving the need for legitimacy, the development of instruments and institutions that can make connections among a vast array of complex and interrelated issues, and passing the test of effectiveness. What is required is the right balance between universal institutions and effective ones. India agrees that if the United Nations system has to be a crucial part of solving the world's problems, it must be provided with adequate authority and resources. The Assembly should be in a position to give clear guidance to the Secretary-General so that the process of reform can be taken forward. I wish to pledge the full support of the Indian delegation in ensuring the success of such an exercise.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Brazil aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Making the Organization a more effective instrument to achieve our priorities is a common goal of the Member States of the United Nations. In that regard, the Secretary-General's proposal is very welcome in our collective effort to proceed with a reform process that will enable the United Nations to work more effectively. Allow me to congratulate him on holding open-ended informal consultations on 24 October, where it was possible to begin an exchange of ideas between Member States and the Secretariat.

In broad terms, the proposals of the Secretary-General can be divided in three categories. The first would include initiatives that can be developed by the Secretariat without the explicit authorization of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General could proceed with the implementation of those measures, without running the risk of Member States indicating

how the plans need to be modified in the event that changes materialize that do not result in the anticipated better functioning of the Organization.

The second category of proposals is characterized by the request for the elaboration of studies that propose ways of strengthening the performance capacity of the United Nations. The majority of proposals related to strengthening the Organization in the area of human rights fall into that category. The same is the case with proposals related to actions 2 through 5, which requested the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to hold consultations on drafting reports and plans with treaty organs and directly with Member States of the Organization. That would not allow for deeper analysis of the proposals related to that item. It would be logical that those proposals be reconsidered by the Member States of the Organization when the studies are ready.

The third category of proposals is related to what was called a recommendation in the previous report of the Secretary-General on the reform of the Organization. In order to proceed with measures related to those proposals, explicit mandates of the General Assembly will be necessary to authorize the Secretary-General to proceed. Generally, additional time and clarity will be needed so that the majority of Member States can properly consider and assess the effects of such measures. To that end, it will be necessary to maintain an ongoing dialogue between Member States and the Secretariat.

The majority of the measures related to reform in the Organization's budget also fall into that category. Even though we agree with the Secretary-General with regard to the need to simplify the budgetary process and the drafting of the medium-term plan, as well as with regard to the need for a stricter system of evaluation and control of United Nations expenditures, we are not convinced that the proposed measures, such as reducing the medium-term plan by half or eliminating the Committee for Programme and Coordination, represent the most convenient route for the ongoing search to achieve those objectives. Those matters must be examined more closely.

A final point, which I must address, is the reform of the Security Council. The Secretary-General has devoted barely three paragraphs of his report to that item, which are found at the beginning of his report. However, he approaches the question categorically, stating in paragraph 20 of his report (A/57/387): "No reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council". I will not go on at great length about my country's position on the reform of the Council, which is broadly known. Nonetheless, it seems to me necessary to emphasize the coincidence of impressions, both on the part of Member States and on the part of the Secretariat, that exist regarding the importance of the item. In that regard, convinced that the Assembly will devote to the process the attention it requires, I reiterate that progress in the discussions on the reform of the Council will depend substantially on the orientation that the presidency of the General Assembly will be able to provide it.

In the consultations held on 24 October, the Deputy Secretary-General underscored the strategic character and the condition of the agenda for changes as main principles of the document entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change". While recognizing the need to give greater detail regarding some of the ongoing measures of the report, she indicated that what is expected in that first stage of appraisal is to be able to rely on the reactions and guidance of Member States. Accordingly, I will proceed cautiously in presenting specific proposals regarding the measures considered in the document, limiting myself to assuring the Secretary-General that he can count on the active participation and support of the Brazilian delegation in the debate and the decisions related to proposed reforms.

As you, Sir, have already stated, the continued dialogue on reform proposals must continue to be held in unofficial consultations, among all Member States. In order to guarantee that those consultations have the productive character that we hope will be reflected in the final outcome of that process, allow me to conclude by reinforcing the suggestion that future consultations on the report be organized on the basis of thematic separation of the measures contained in the document.

Mrs. Loemban Tobing-Klein (Suriname): The international community needs a strong multilateral institution to address contemporary global issues in this era of globalization. This body, the United Nations, still proves to be the best forum for dealing with the challenges facing us in today's world. To efficiently operate in this dynamic process of current international relations, reforms to strengthen the Organization are essential.

We, therefore, welcome this initiative of the Secretary-General to look once again into the issue of United Nations reform through an agenda for further change. We congratulate the Secretary-General on his excellent report, which deals with strengthening the United Nations, doing what matters, serving Member States better, working better together, allocating resources to priorities, investing in excellence and managing change.

The reforms outlined in the Secretary-General's report would lead to a more effective United Nations that would be better able to assist us in reaching the pivotal Millennium Development Goals. At the national level, my Government is working towards achieving those goals by, first and foremost, incorporating that set of priorities into national policies.

We are pleased that the Secretary-General acknowledged the importance of reform of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. We absolutely agree that "The promotion and protection of human rights is a bedrock requirement for the realization of the Charter's vision of a just and peaceful world" (*A/57/387, para. 45*). We therefore applaud the work being done by the United Nations in this field, as well as the Secretary-General's proposals for intensifying United Nations efforts in the area of human rights.

In this regard we have to stress that every human being has the right to development. This right is enshrined in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986. Development and respect for human rights are interdependent.

We agree fully that the very valuable report of the Secretary-General entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", pays special attention to human rights and its interrelationship to development. My delegation is extremely satisfied with this rights-based approach and wishes to thank the Secretary-General for pursuing it. In this respect we also wish to stress the importance of human rights education as a key to development.

The right to development has been reaffirmed as a universal and inalienable right and as an integral part of fundamental human rights during the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993.

All the proposed changes, improvements and efforts at streamlining contained in the Secretary-General's report are focusing on the people of the world; they are aimed at making the life of the people better and more rewarding, at meeting development goals and at making the United Nations a more effective instrument in the service of the world's people, as the Secretary-General stated at the opening of the debate on his report yesterday morning.

Improvements in the Department of Public Information; a focus on the quality, rather than the quantity of United Nations reports and conferences; strengthening partnerships with civil society and the private sector; allocating resources to priorities, and investing in the workforce of the United Nations are all areas where we anticipate change. We are especially pleased by the fact that the Secretary-General has acknowledged the difficulties facing smaller nations like my own, in playing a meaningful role in United Nations activities, because of difficulties in keeping track of and participating in the vast amount of annual meetings.

Suriname was privileged to chair the meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Group during the month of September, when the Secretary-General, briefing the Group on his current report, said the meeting was the first in a series he intended to have with regional groups. He requested guidance from Member countries, as well as technical advice from various committees.

My delegation noted with appreciation that the Secretary-General stressed during this important briefing several priority subjects, including, the promotion and protection of human rights and more assistance from Member States in this area; the need for the United Nations to respond to the requirements of the international community and to move forward at a faster pace and at a higher level; the need to better allocate resources to priority areas; improved United Nations interaction with civil society; the Organization's responsibility regarding African-related affairs; the streamlining of vital functions of the United Nations; better coordination in the social and economic area, especially in developing countries; improved service to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, as well as to Member States in general; realignment of the United Nations priorities to coincide with the aims of the Millennium Declaration, as well as recently held summits and conferences;

implementation of the Millennium Development Goals; and increased focus on information and communication technology.

If we, as Member States, privileged as we are to belong to this important family of nations with so many great developmental potentials, can succeed in joining hands to realize the essential goals of this important report of the Secretary-General, we can live up to the noble values, principles and goals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, namely respect for human rights, human dignity, equality, tolerance, peace, national and international security and social and economic progress.

The Government of Suriname is grateful for the continuous, serious and strong efforts of the Secretary-General to improve the lives of the people on this planet; we fully support the Secretary-General in his endeavours to strengthen our Organization; we look forward to a continuously improving United Nations and we are ready to contribute where and when possible.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.